The Potency of Prayer

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A Handbook on Prayer for the Everyday Christian

By

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With an Introduction by

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To
Harriet Ransom Horton
my devoted wife
whose daily assistance has made
possible its production
this volume is
inscribed

The potency of prayer hath subdued the strength of fire; it hath bridled the rage of lions, hushed anarchy to rest, extinguished wars, appeased the elements, expelled demons, burst the chains of death, expanded the gates of Heaven, assuaged diseases, repelled frauds, rescued cities from destruction, stayed the sun in its course, and arrested the progress of the thunderbolt.

Prayer is an all-sufficient panoply, a treasure undiminished, a mine which is never exhausted, a sky unobscured by clouds, a heaven unruffled by the storm. It is the root, the fountain, the mother of a thousand blessings.

—CHRYSOSTOM.

INTRODUCTION

TO speak of prayer is to deal with a delicate subject. There is about the experience of true prayer something so intimate and personal that one hesitates to give to it any publicity; yet the importance of the subject is such that on it the true Christian cannot consent to be silent. It is evidently a keen sense of this importance that has led the author to prepare this volume. I have read the manuscript with pleasure and profit.

Prayer is a spiritual experience in which Christ constantly exercised Himself, and upon which He spoke more often than upon most other subjects. But His instruction was exceeded by His practice. He prayed for Peter that his faith might not fail; He prayed for His disciples that they might be one, as He and His Father were one; He prayed that they might be kept from the evil in the world; He prayed for the descent of the Holy Ghost that His people might be empowered; He prayed for Himself in the Garden of Gethsemane, and upon the cross; He prayed for His enemies that they might be forgiven, because they knew not what they were doing; He prayed for the Church of all centuries. We read in the Old Testament that Daniel, at his window looking

toward Jerusalem, kneeled and prayed morning, noon, and night; but, as F. B. Meyer said, concerning Jesus: "Perennially from His lips pours out a stream of tender supplication and entreaty."

Any man who makes a contribution to the prayer and devotional life of individual Christians is thereby contributing to the true Church of God in a most essential matter. Those who have received profit from such other helpful works of the author as *Personal and Practical Christian Work*, *Outline Studies in the Epistles of John and Jude*, and *The Wonderful Names of Our Wonderful Lord*, will not suffer disappointment in *The Potency of Prayer*. After an acquaintance of thirty years with him, we are glad to commend to the general public the thoughts and expressions of a man whose prayer life has harmonized with the truths presented in this volume.

In Dr. Horton's long ministry he has seen marvelous things accomplished in answer to prayer, the most notable of them perhaps being the rise of the Los Angeles Bible Institute, of which for many years he was the superintendent, an institution that was absolutely God's answer to his petition. We regard it, therefore, a privilege to commend this volume to all such readers as seek a more intimate fellowship with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

W. B. Riley.

Minneapolis, Minn.

PREFACE

"*The prayer of the upright is his delight.*"—PROVERBS 15: 8.

MANY, many books have been written upon prayer, and God be thanked for every one which rings true to the whole Word of God, for anything, everything which will help to accentuate the value and power of real prayer in the life of the believer is valuable. But the Lord has put in the heart of the writer of this little volume a desire, if possible, to put greater emphasis upon the *simplicity* and *naturalness* of real prayer. When this is not made clear, God is robbed of His glory, the saints are pauperized and the poor world desolated.

Real prayer is the pulsing of the heart; the voice of the soul; the cry for forgiveness or for help; a recognition of the fact that our Lord loves us and longs to help us, and a recognition of our relation to Him as bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh. This is a matter of tremendous interest to the life of the individual, the Church and the world. If prayer had its proper place in the hearts and lives of believers, wondrous things would be accomplished every day throughout the world.

If some multimillionaire should announce through the newspapers that he would gladly re-

spond to requests for gifts of money, he would be bankrupt within a week. But God can never become bankrupt. Giving cannot impoverish Him, nor withholding enrich Him. On the contrary, giving enriches Him, as it will, also, every follower of His.

It has pleased God to put in His holy Word, in plain, definite terms, the meaning, purpose and power of prayer, and to give the fullest assurance of His desire to hear the requests and supply the needs of His own. If there could but come to the Church a revival of real prayer, in which the whole body of believers would unite, there would surely come, not merely "showers" but the *abundant rain* which would refresh the souls of saints, revolutionize the Church and make glad the heart of the Lord who gave His life for fallen man.

As the themes presented have a common basis, there will, of necessity, be somewhat of repetition in the comments under each, but is there not need of repetition if the prayer life is to be revived in our hearts? If the reader will pray over each chapter as it is read, opening wide the door of the heart that the Holy Spirit may make His throne there, at the same time praying for others who may also be reading the book, a real prayer circle will be created which will mean mighty things for God. "Pray ye, therefore!" (Matthew 9: 38).

T. C. H.

Long Beach, California.

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THE A B C OF OBLIGATION ON BELIEVERS TO PRAY

We should pray because we are His:

Ambassadors
Bondmen
Creatures
Companions
Dependents
Employees
Fishermen (Soul-winners)
Guides (to go before)
Helpers (to help others)
Investors (to invest His assets)
Joint heirs
Kinsmen
Light-bearers
Ministers
Namesakes (Called by His name)
Officials (of His organization)
Partners
Qualified agents (by His anointing)
Representatives
Saints and Sentinels
Teachers (of His Word)
Under-shepherds
Vessels (Meet for the Master's use)
Witnesses (to the Truth)
Examples (to the believers)
Yokefellows
Zealous followers.

I

PRINCIPLES OF PRAYER

Prayer, as taught by Jesus Christ, in its essential features, enters into all the relations of life. . . . Our spirit towards folks affects our life of prayer. . . . Unity with the brotherhood goes before unity with God: "Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hast aught against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar and go thy way. First, be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift" (Matthew 5:23).

—E. M. Bounds, in *The Reality of Prayer.*

In the natural life, the child who communes most with the father and mother gets the most from them. The other children, almost without asking, enjoy the possession of home and raiment and food. But the *one child* —obeying, serving, seeking to give joy to the parents, and entering into the larger and deeper things of their lives, obtains *these* gifts, and much besides.

Thus it is in God's family. It does not take much praying, or obeying, or serving to secure the necessities of life from God, for His grace is great and His love is wondrous kind. But it takes an amplitude of these virtues if one is to enter into the *larger* meaning of life with God, including power in prayer. . . . As union leads to communion, so communion leads to union; and it is out of such a union, in the midst of communion, that "the supplication of a righteous man availeth much in its working" (James 5:16 R. V.).

—Henry W. Frost, in *Effective Praying.*

I

PRINCIPLES OF PRAYER

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your father which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask him?"—MATTHEW 7:11.

And what is prayer?
'Tis a missive sped by faith;
'Tis a thought, a sigh, a breath;
'Tis the soul's repentant cry
In the ears of God most high;
Messenger, sent forth for good;
'Tis the speech of man with God;
'Tis the letter of our love
To our Father's home above;
Incense rising to the skies,
Morning, evening sacrifice.

—ROBERT MAGUIRE.

WHAT is prayer? Prayer is a petition, a request, an appeal, a supplication, an entreaty. There is no Biblical definition of the word "prayer," but there are many definitions in the Bible of the laws which govern prayer, and of God's demands of those who would come into His presence, and these definitions need constant reiteration.

The basis of prayer to God is our relationship to Him, and our attitude in that relationship. To see the head of a firm, or the president of a company,

one must seek that privilege through an appointment. These are busy men and rules are necessary. Some men are not accessible at all times, as, for instance, the pope of Rome, kings and presidents.

God is accessible at any time of the day or night, but there are certain conditions which must be met. We must come in the name of Jesus, and to do that we must acknowledge Him as our Vindicator. We must be blood-washed. We must "clean up," confessing every known sin and abandoning it. We must be "right with God," and, if we are true believers, we know what that means. "God heareth not sinners." The term so often used, "God be merciful to me a sinner," means literally "God be *mercy-seated* to me a sinner." That is, "Look upon the mercy-seat where the blood offering for my sin has been made."

God operates always and everywhere in accord with definite laws, and He has a law for prayer-access to Him. Hear our Lord: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life; *no man* cometh unto the Father, *but by me*" (John 14: 6). How, then, can the Father receive any one who rejects His only begotten Son? He cannot.

We are responsible representatives of God by the law of our relationship to Him. When Christ is accepted by the individual as Saviour and Lord, immediately this relationship is established. We become children of God, through faith in Jesus

Christ (Galatians 3: 26), members of His family, under orders. What He commands we must do.

A knowledge of God's Word and of the world-needs lays the foundation for a prayer life. We learn to do things by doing them, and we learn to pray by praying. He knows the end from the beginning. He could operate without our help if He should so choose, but He has chosen to use us to carry out His plans and purposes. He is to profit by our obedience to His command, and so are we. By prayer, we are to prove the verity of God's promises, and enlarge our own faith in His Word and His work. Take one of Paul's experiences as an illustration:

"And it came to pass, that the father of Publius lay sick of a fever, and of a bloody flux; to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him. So when this was done, others also, which had diseases in the island, came, and were healed. Who also honoured us with many honours; and when we departed, they laded us with such things as were necessary" (Acts 28: 8–10).

Note the order here: Publius, on the island of Melita, where Paul was shipwrecked; Paul prayed for the father of Publius; the father was healed; then others sought Paul's prayers and were healed; then the needs of Paul himself were freely and fully supplied by those to whom he had thus ministered.

God moved upon the heart of Publius and gave him faith in Paul's prayers. God used Paul to be a blessing to many souls. *Then* God provided for Paul's temporal needs, and who can tell of the harvest which resulted from this one incident, as it influenced the lives of these barbarians and through them the lives of others, in ever widening circles?

The simplicity of prayer, as here demonstrated, and the tremendous results from it, are marvellous, but they call for sincerity in putting prayer to the test. We can never trifle with God, but we can trust Him in childlike faith, if we fulfill the conditions which He has laid down, and thereby give Him great joy, for He loves our fellowship and loves to respond to our requests.

Come, my soul, thy suit prepare,
Jesus loves *to answer prayer;*
He Himself has bid thee pray,
Therefore will not say thee nay.

—John Newton.

II

PURPOSE OF PRAYER

The pivot of piety is prayer. A pivot is of double use; it acts as a fastener and as a center; it holds in place, and it is the axis of revolution. Prayer is also the double secret. It keeps steadfast in faith, and it helps to all holy activity. . . .

To keep in close touch with God in the secret chamber of His presence, is the great underlying purpose of prayer. To speak with God is a priceless privilege; but what shall be said of having and hearing God speak with us! We can tell Him nothing that He does not know; but He can tell us what no imagination has ever conceived, no research has ever unveiled.

The highest of all possible attainments is the knowledge of God and this is the practical mode of His revelation of Himself. Even His holy Word needs to be read in the light of the closet, if it is to be understood. "And when Moses was gone into the tabernacle of the congregation to speak with him, then he heard the voice of one speaking unto him from off the mercy seat that was upon the ark of testimony,—from between the two cherubim, and he spoke unto him" (Numbers 7: 89).

—A. T. Pierson.

II

PURPOSE OF PRAYER

"And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."
—JOHN 14: 13.

Lord, teach me what to say, and do
For this one day;
And, as the hours go fleeting by,
I humbly pray
That I low at Thy feet may lie,
Where so I may
Hear softest whisper of Thy voice
To go, or stay.

To go, will be to work for Thee
Through good or ill;
To stay, may much more harder be,
Just standing still!
Lord, open Thou mine eyes to see
Which way is Thine;
That day by day I may please Thee
My Lord Divine.
—DAILY MANNA.

WHAT is the "design" or "aim" or "intention" of prayer as set before us in the Word of God? This is a simple question and must be answered simply. There are many ways of approaching this subject. We are viewing it in a

relative manner,—thinking of God as the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and the Father of those who have accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and, in conformity with the law of God, have become children of God through faith in the finished work of His Son.

God, in accordance with all of His manifestations, reveals Himself through definite laws. For example,—the "Law of the Spirit": "For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8: 2). Access to God the Father is through Jesus Christ. "No man cometh unto the Father, but by Me," said our Lord in John 14: 6. If we are children of God, then, there are certain laws, established by God, which relate to us and not to the world. The Purpose of Prayer is to establish our relation to the Father in a simple, practical manner. We might say, for instance, that God has installed a telephone line called "Prayer" between His children and Himself. We call—He answers. His ear is always open (Psalms 17: 6; 34: 15; 86: 6, 7; 102: 2) and He says to His people "Incline *your ears* to the *words of my mouth*" (Psalm 78:1). He speaks to us, and "He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith" (Revelation 2: 7). He is never asleep, never away, but always *there,* waiting and longing to hear from us.

It is possible, then, to have unbroken communi-

cation between God and His children, provided *we* keep the line clear. It is true that "God heareth not sinners," but it is equally true that He does hear the saints. He will not be a partner in any wrong-doing; He will not be blind to any facts; if He were it would hinder and not help us. "The Lord is far from the wicked, but he heareth the prayer of the righteous" (Proverbs 15: 29).

So, then, we must acknowledge, confess and forsake all known sin and sins of every character before we can claim the promise. But when that has been done, then we are His *agents,* in business for Him. We represent Him every day, wherever we are. We must be on the lookout for opportunities to "sell" His goods—salvation. Satan has been on the job with seductive and alluring samples, representing them as from the storehouse of Heaven. We must expose this traitor and convince people that we—the children of God—have the real goods, tested and tried, with the hall-mark of genuineness upon them. We have abundant testimony from reliable witnesses all down through the centuries to prove our claims.

The sin-sick world is in need and as God's representatives we are left here to aid and assist Him. The floods have broken down the barriers and the world is overcome with the waters that are deluging and destroying the earth. There is a call for boats to bear the refugees to a place of

safety. God is calling: "Throw out the life-line! Man the life-boats! Rescue the perishing! Care for the dying!"

It is His work and we are His workmen. We must report daily, sometimes hourly, and get our orders from Headquarters. So we cry and He answers. Thus prayer cements our relationship with our Heavenly Father. We grow into closer and closer fellowship with Him. Prayer also intensifies our desire for His glory and broadens our outlook for service. *He needs us!* Wonderful—is it not—that He should be depending upon us for His service and be willing to coöperate with us in that service?

How natural it is to be "lifted up" when we have acquaintance with some noted person and to call attention to the fact. But, oh, the wonders of not only acquaintance with, but fellowship and service with the King of kings and Lord of lords! The very contemplation of this tremendous fact as a real truth, and the eternal glory of it, should be a summons to us to keep in constant touch with Him over the "prayer-phone" and have the satisfaction of hearing His beloved voice saying, "Yes!"

"Pray-ers" are one of the greatest needs of the Church, and the greatest need of God. He *needs* them. He *depends* upon them. Praying people are responsible for the great events and epochs in the history of the Church. Read church history

and note how in every time of need and in every time of progress, prayer has played a prominent part. "Need" and "knees" are two words intimately associated in the development of the life of the Church.

Prayer is a coöperative service. We never pray for the plans and purposes which will in any way advance the interests of God in the Church and world, that we do not advance and promote those interests. We have only to stop and think a moment to see how true this is.

God wants His Word and work extended. He moves upon the heart of some saint who is in fellowship with Him. That saint has a vision of the need and commences to plead and pray in its behalf. God answers and a heart fellowship is established. Prayer after prayer follows, blessing after blessing is bestowed, and great things result.

Think of any great work in the history of Christianity and note the small beginning and subsequent enlargement as God answered prayer, enlarged the vision and increased the blessing.

The Purpose of Prayer is a theme of such magnitude that it is impossible to adequately treat it in a short chapter. History, experience and everyday developments make this clear. The great question for us all is, Have we sensed the purpose and possibilities of prayer in our own lives, and if not, will we seek to do so?

III

PROMISE FOR PRAYER

When David, the stripling shepherd, without any outside armour, stood before the giant Goliath who "had an helmet of brass upon his head" and "was clad with a coat of mail" the weight of which was "five thousand shekels of brass," and his weapons were a sword, a spear and a javelin, David faced him confidently, saying: "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a javelin; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hosts (*i. e.*, 'enclosed as in a tower in the name of the Lord'), the God of the armies of Israel, which thou hast defied." David in that "strong tower" was safe, as Goliath, in *his* armour, was not. . . .

"To come in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ" is not merely saying His name over, but it is being *enclosed* in His Name, and representing that which His Name represents. . . . If we would ask anything "in the name of Jesus," we must first be sure that we are in that Name,—our life being hid in His life, our name in His Name. Then, let us be sure that what we ask, we ask *for His sake,* and that it is something He would ask for us if He were actually standing in our stead and making our petitions for us!

Coming thus to the Father, we come in the *Name,* the *spirit* and the *likeness* of His Son; and the Father will hear and answer us, because we are representatives of His Son, enwrapped by and dwelling within His very self as the Supreme Representative of the Father.

—H. Clay Trumbull, in *Personal Prayer.*

III

PROMISE FOR PRAYER

"For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him, Amen."—2 CORINTHIANS 1 : 20.

Upon Thy Word I rest
Each pilgrim day;
This golden staff is best
For all the way.
What Jesus Christ hath spoken
Cannot be broken!

Upon Thy Word I rest,
So strong, so sure!
So full of comfort blest,
So sweet, so pure!
The charter of salvation,
Faith's broad foundation.

Upon Thy Word I stand,
That cannot die;
Christ seals it in my hand,
He cannot lie!
Thy Word that faileth never,
Abideth ever.

—HAVERGAL.

PRAYER is simply "talking with God," "communion with God," "seeking help from God"; asking for wisdom, for protection, for guidance, for daily supply of our daily needs. It is, in short,

the attitude of children to a loving father, in dependence upon him for all things. The *privilege* of prayer is ours, and the *promise* of an answer is ours, also.

If we are children of God, by faith in Jesus Christ, then we belong to the family of God, our Father. Daily, often hourly,—yes, *constantly,* we may be in communication with Him, for the need is constant. We love to come to Him, and He loves to have us come. Where is the true earthly father or mother who does not love to hear the voice of the child in an appeal, or request, for the things it needs?

Very wrong impressions concerning God and His relation to His own children (as well as His relation to the lost) exist in the minds of many and need to be removed before we can appropriate, in their fulness, the promises of God which cover every possible need and circumstance of our lives. Listen to these suggestive promises, just a few of those with which the Bible fairly teems:

"According as he hath promised" (Exodus 12: 25).

"Gave Solomon wisdom as he promised" (1 Kings 15: 12).

"As I promised to David" (1 Kings 9: 5).

"That good thing which I have promised" (Jeremiah 33: 14).

"Wait for the promise of the Father" (Acts 1: 4).

"Him hath God raised up, according to his promise" (Acts 13: 32).

"Looking for the promise" (Titus 1: 2).

"Partakers of his promise" (Ephesians 3: 6).

"Which the Lord hath promised" (1 John 2: 25).

"The Lord is not slack concerning his promise" (1 Peter 3: 9).

"All the promises of God are yea and amen" to those who believe. Are *you* a believer? Have *you* heard Jesus saying, "No man cometh unto the Father but by me"? and have you come? Then you have the right to claim that wonderful promise which our Lord gave to His disciples the night before His crucifixion:

"Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it" (John 14: 13, 14).

Are there any conditions here? Yes, surely. The "whatsoever" must be for the glory of the Father, for He says: "WHATSOEVER ye shall ask, THAT will I do, that the FATHER MAY BE GLORIFIED IN THE SON." This necessarily excludes praying for anything in which God could not be glorified. God's laws are definite and they are defined in His Word. We need to study the Bible to know *how* to pray, and *what*

to pray for, in order that our prayers may be *in His Name* and *for His glory*.

For instance, take the promise in Philippians 4: 19: "My God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus." One might say, "Well, if that promise is true, then I do not need to labour. I will ask God to supply my needs, and my need is seventy-five dollars a week. I will ask Him to send me that sum every Monday morning, and I will take up Christian work." But suppose the Lord wanted you to sweep the streets, and your services in that capacity were not worth seventy-five dollars a week, but only twenty dollars. That would surely be a foolish prayer, one that would not be for His glory, and therefore could not be granted.

Christian people often pick up a promise of this kind and wonder why God does not "make good." They forget that the crux of every promise for prayer is "the will of God." We must always be in His will in prayer and in service. Take this for an illustration:

"Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children, with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him.

And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.

But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what

ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of? and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able."

The request of this mother for her sons would seem to be laudable and honourable, and inasmuch as *some one* must be on the right hand and on the left, she desired the honour for her sons. But the Father had other plans, and He alone could make the selection.

Many foolish prayers, selfish prayers, unanswerable prayers, are made, many, no doubt, with real desire, but without a knowledge of God's will as revealed in His Word. Our Lord is given over three hundred names and titles in the Bible, but the *Promise for Prayer* is in connection with *one name* only—"Son,"—*God's* Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Not "*a* son" as the Modernists would have it; not the "Jesus" of the deniers of His virgin birth; but "the only begotten Son—God manifest in the flesh!"

That Name means nothing unless used with reverent faith in Him whom the Bible declares to be the God-Man. If we ask anything in *that* Name—the "Name which is above every name"—it would be impossible to ask for anything which would be contrary to His will, and "if we ask anything *according to his will,* he heareth us. And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we

ask, we know that we have the petitions which we desired of him" (1 John 5: 14, 15).

"How wonderful that He hath answered me!"
O faithless heart! He said *that He would hear*
And answer thy poor prayer; and He hath heard,
And proved His promises. Wherefore didst thou fear?
Why marvel that thy Lord hath kept His Word?
More wonderful if He should fail to bless
Expectant faith and prayer with good success!

—HAVERGAL.

IV

PRIVILEGE OF PRAYER

It is the privilege of every follower of Jesus Christ to come into close and living touch with Him through the blessed channel of prayer, and the character of that intercourse determines, in large measure, the value of our life and service for Him. In other words, no Christian can afford to neglect the prayer-chamber, for it is the place of confession, of illumination, of adjustment, of revelation, and of power.—SELECTED.

It is our privilege to pray boldly. It is often said, "Beggars must not be choosers." But here is a place where beggars *may* be choosers. And beggars we are when we come before the Throne of Grace,—otherwise "grace is no more grace." Nevertheless, because grace *is* grace, the beggar-petitioner may come, find acceptance, ask and ask boldly. Sir Walter Raleigh once made a request of the Queen and she petulantly answered, "Raleigh, when will you leave off begging?" Sir Walter replied, "When your Majesty leaves off giving," and his request was granted. But the God of all grace never grows weary of our asking and never rebukes us for coming.

—HENRY W. FROST, in *Effective Praying*.

IV

PRIVILEGE OF PRAYER

"Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight."—I JOHN 3:21, 22.

What various hindrances we meet
In coming to the Mercy-seat!
Yet who, that knows the worth of prayer,
But wishes to be often there?

Prayer makes the darkened cloud withdraw;
Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw;
Gives exercise to faith and love;
Brings every blessing from above.

Restraining prayer, we cease to fight.
Prayer makes the Christian's armour bright;
And Satan trembles when he sees
The weakest saint upon his knees.

—WILLIAM COWPER.

THERE is perhaps no single privilege or favour bestowed by God upon the children of men equal to that of intercourse with the Maker and Ruler of the universe. It is considered a great privilege and honour to have access to an earthly ruler, and an honour well worth "paying the price" to obtain, —but, note the contrast! Any one,—old or young,

black or white, red or yellow, learned or ignorant, rich or poor,—may have access to God, the Father, provided only that they come in the Name of His Son, Jesus Christ: "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it" (John 14: 13, 14).

Now in order to be able to come to the Father "in the name" of the Lord Jesus Christ, there are certain conditions which must be complied with. We must be "children of God through faith in Jesus Christ." We must be "born" into the family of God. (John 1: 13; 1 Peter 2: 2.)

But not only must we be children, but children who are in harmony and fellowship with the Father; children who have righted all wrongs by confession of sin; children who are living the "God-family" life, and are seeking to honour and glorify the Father in word and deed.

Why is this Privilege of Prayer so great? Because its opportunities are fraught with such tremendous consequences. In prayer we reach and touch the Hand Omnipotent, one motion of which may determine the destiny of a nation—that Hand which fashioned the worlds and sent them spinning out into space! Truly, it is no trifling thing to have such a privilege, and if we are wise, we will meditate carefully and prayerfully upon all that it means and then adjust our lives to its conditions.

Very few Christians have ever analyzed this

theme and sought to conform their lives to its requirements, as illustrated, for example, in the prayer of Solomon in 1 Kings 8: 22–61. Read this marvellous prayer through carefully. Note the height and depth, the pathos of Solomon's plea and all that it involved for Israel. This was a great prayer for great things.

Then contrast it with the prayer of the blind man as recorded in Mark 10: 51:

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight."

Were some millionaire to give us a check book with his signature on every check, with the assurance that it would give him pleasure to have us draw on his bank account for anything we needed or wanted, what joy would fill our hearts; how eager we would be to have our friends know of our good fortune, and how we would extol the name of our benefactor everywhere! That would be perfectly natural and human,—but, alas! how insignificant and meaningless it seems to be to many Christians that He hath thrust the "whatsoever" into our hands, with His signature, "in My Name!"

If every true believer could be awakened to a realization of the Privilege of Prayer, what a revolution would be effected in this poor old world of

sin and sorrow! What privileges of *aspiration,* as holy desires were kindled in our hearts; what privileges of *access* to the Throne, in *anticipation* of great results; and what joy would be given to Him who still says to us, "Hitherto have ye asked *nothing. ASK* and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."

The Word of God is in our hands. The promises are still there. The desire of our gracious Lord is that we might avail ourselves of our privileges. And, more than all that, we must face the fact that failure upon our part to avail ourselves of the provision which He has made for us, makes us *robbers,* for we are robbing God of the glory which results from granting our requests: "Whatsoever ye shall ask . . . that will I do, *that the Father may be glorified in the Son*" (John 14: 13). "Therefore, to him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin" (James 4: 17).

Let us meditate upon this and then apply it to ourselves in connection with the Privilege of Prayer, to the end that we may not only fully avail ourselves of that privilege for ourselves, our own interests and matters of special interest to us, but may our prayer be, "Lord, enlarge our faith in Thy promises. Enlarge our vision of the world need and the church need. Stir our hearts through the indwelling Holy Spirit to make the most of the Privilege of Prayer. Amen!"

V

PRICE OF PRAYER

John Hyde, a classmate of the writer, has probably excelled in what he did for Christ's Church. He did not excel as a student though probably he was above the average. When he went to India he did not at first give promise of being a remarkable missionary. Indeed, he seemed to lack the enthusiasm and zeal a young missionary ought to have.

But a mighty change took place in Hyde when he learned that prayer was one of God's indispensable methods of working. He became known as "The Apostle of Prayer." . . . With him the work of soul-saving became a passion. Foodless days and sleepless nights were spent in prayer. Shaken with sobs, he would plead, "O God, give me souls or I die!" Hundreds, even thousands, of souls were given him in answer to prayer. . . .

The more he prayed the greater became his passion for souls, and the greater were the numbers won. If only the Church could grasp the meaning of prayer in God's program and be willing to PAY THE PRICE of wakeful watchings,—of yearning, pleading, agonizing prayer for the myriads of lost souls as did "Praying Hyde," then the Divine program for the present age would be speedily fulfilled.

—Rev. Grant Stroh, in *God's World Program.*

V

PRICE OF PRAYER

"Ye shall seek me and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."—JEREMIAH 29: 13.

Pour out your souls to God,
And bow them with your knees;
And spread your heart and hands abroad,
And pray for Zion's peace:
Your guides and brethren bear
Forever on your mind;
Extend the arms of mighty prayer,
In grasping all mankind.

From strength to strength go on;
Wrestle and fight and pray;
Tread all the powers of darkness down,
And win the well-fought day:
Still let the Spirit cry,
In all His soldiers—"Come!"
Till Christ the Lord descend from high,
And take the conquerors home.

—CHARLES WESLEY.

WHILE prayer is the simplest thing in the world, it is also the costliest; and while it is the easiest thing in the world, it is also the most difficult.

In prayer, we approach the very throne of God. Access to Him is easier than access to an earthly sovereign, to the President of the United States, or even to the head of some great financial or indus-

trial concern, for from God we have the invitations: "Come unto me." "Ask, and it shall be given you." "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I," and many other like invitations, exhortations and even supplications from God to come into His presence.

But, on the other hand, there are barriers to our approach: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me" (Psalm 76: 18). "Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss" (James 4: 3). If God answered our prayers without regard to our attitude to Him, He would not be a faithful God nor a true God. A mere profession of right relationship will not do. It must be real.

Now this is no easy thing. This is a wicked world and a trying age. The world grows worse and worse. It has never been an easy thing to be a Christian; never easy to yield all and follow Him; never easy to control our old sinful natures; never easy to adjust ourselves to God's definite commands.

When we go to church we feel that we must wear our best clothes, have our shoes polished, etc.,—what for? Why, of course, so that we may look "respectable" and make a good impression on the people we meet. We recognize that certain things are expected of church members in order to conform to that which is appropriate to a church service, but sometimes we get an idea that we can

cry to God without reference to heart conditions, and that He will hear and answer. This is not true: "Because I have called and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded: . . . I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh" (Proverbs 1: 24–28). "They cried, but there was none to save them; even unto the Lord, but he answered them not" (Psalm 18: 41). "And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood" (Isaiah 1: 15). Also, Matthew 7: 22, 23; 25: 10–12; Luke 13: 25–28.

God would not be a righteous God were He to respond to our prayers when we are out of fellowship with Him. At such times, He will gladly respond to our confession of sin and unfaithfulness, and our plea for forgiveness, and *then* we have the right to present to Him our petitions for other things. When our hearts are right with Him, He is right there, always; but when carelessness, indifference to His Word and His desires, selfishness, worldliness and sin dominate us, He cannot respond. He must deny us. He must correct us. He must teach us.

Prayer is an *investment* given to us by God, not to be used for our own selfish purposes, but for His glory. The Church is a great corporation of which every member of His body is a represen-

tative. We have a service to render to our fellow-members and to a lost world, and this service is of the highest character, involving, as it does, the glory of the Godhead itself.

He has given us the privilege of calling upon Him for ourselves and for others. This is a great and grave responsibility, attended with tremendous responsibilities and possibilities. The moment we analyze and realize this statement, we are face to face with a conscious obligation.

Christ died for the world, and He has authorized us to go and give this good news to the world. He has equipped us with a Guide Book and with instructions, and has promised to empower us for the service. (Matthew 28: 18–20; Acts 1: 8). This is no easy task. We are compelled to pray our way into access to unsaved people, and to pray for wisdom in delivering the message from God, and to pray that the hearts of those to whom we speak may be prepared.

It takes time and energy to do this work, and it takes time to prepare the way by prayer. Many pleasures and privileges (innocent enough, perhaps, in themselves) must be sacrificed. The old hymn is true. We must "take time to be holy." It does take time. We must "make appointments" with God and keep them. We must prepare for the interview and keep a memorandum so that the business may be done in a practical manner. If anything hinders us from keeping so

important an engagement, we must " wire in " and apologize and ask for another interview!

" God keeps books " and He expects us to bear this in mind. Many a saint has lost valuable interest because of careless business dealings with God. Should not our hearts leap with joy at the thought that it is possible for us to accomplish great things through prayer? We can circle the globe. We can carry on our hearts the needs of the whole world. We can read the daily papers and hear the call for prayer from every direction. We can feel the throbbing heart of sin-stricken, sorrowing, suffering people everywhere and can lift our hearts to God in prayer in their behalf. We can develop a tender, loving interest in people whom we may never meet personally here, but whom we may meet " over there." We can move out from the confines of our little lives into a great, broad, world-wide prayer life, and have a wondrous joy—unknown to many—if we will!

May the loving Lord Himself lead us to the green pastures and the still waters where we may quietly learn the lesson and yield ourselves to a life of intercession for the outpouring of God's holy Spirit and the infilling of that Spirit with its Heavenly fire. " Lord, teach us to pray! "

VI

PREPARATION FOR PRAYER

To pray is the greatest thing we can do; and to do it well there must be calmness, time and deliberation; otherwise, it is degraded into the littlest and meanest of things. . . .

True praying has the largest results for good; and poor praying, the least. We cannot do too much real praying; we cannot do too little of sham praying. We must learn anew the worth of prayer; enter anew the school of prayer. . . . There is nothing which takes more time to learn. And if we would really learn this wondrous art, we must not give just a fragment of time here and there—"A little talk with Jesus," as we sometimes sing—but we must demand and hold with iron grasp the best hours of the day for God and for prayer, or there will be no praying worthy the name.

This, however, is not a day of prayer. Few men there are who really pray. In these days of hurry and bustle, of electricity and steam, men will not take time to pray. Preachers there are who "say prayers" as a part of their program, on regular or state occasions; but who "stirs himself up to take hold on God?" Who is there that prays as Jacob prayed—till he was crowned as a prevailing, princely intercessor? Or as Elijah—till all the locked-up forces of nature were unsealed and a famine-stricken land blossomed as the garden of God? . . . Praying is almost a lost art—out of date—and the greatest benefactor this age could have is the man who will bring the preachers and the church back to prayer.

—E. M. Bounds, in *Preacher and Prayer.*

VI

PREPARATION FOR PRAYER

"Prepare your hearts unto the Lord, and serve him only; and he will deliver you out of the hand of the Philistines."—I SAMUEL 7:3.

"Who shall ascend unto the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully."

—PSALM 24:4.

When thou dost talk to God—by prayer, I mean—
Lift up pure hands, lay down all lust's desires;
Fix thoughts on Heaven, present a conscience clean;
Since holy blame to Mercy's throne aspires;
Confess fault's guilt, crave pardon for thy sin,
Tread holy paths, call grace to guide therein.

Even as Elijah, mounting to the sky,
Did cast his mantle to the earth behind;
So, when the heart presents the prayer on high,
Exclude the world from traffic with the mind;
Lips near to God, and ranging heart within,
Is but vain babbling, and converts to sin.

—ROBERT SOUTHWELL.

THERE is no single act in the life of the believer of more importance than that of prayer; none so much needed and none so much neglected. If "prayer is a life" (and it is), then the prayer life should be such that it is ready for service at any

moment. Perhaps there is no single need to-day so great as the need for *praying people*—Christian people who, conscious of the need, conscious of their call, conscious of their right, conscious of the value and joy of prayer—hold themselves ready at any moment to put prayer into action.

But in order that there may be real prayer, there must first be the proper preparation. God loves to give. He loves to comfort. He loves to advise. He loves to supply *all* our needs—physical, mental and spiritual. He is a loving Father,—yes! but He *is* a *Father,* and as a Father He demands obedience from His household, and His rules must be obeyed.

Three things are essential for proper Preparation for Prayer: (1) Right Relationship with God. (2) Right Recognition of Our Rights as Children of God. (3) Right Response to God's Requirements.

Right Relationship. Have we a *right* to come "boldly to the Throne of Grace"? If not, then we should not come. We should not allow Satan to deceive us in this respect, for there is but *one way* of access to the Father, and that is through the Door, Christ Jesus: "I am the door; by me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved; and shall go in and out and find pasture" (John 10: 9). "Jesus saith unto them, I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father but by me" (John 14: 6).

The family relationship is established by faith in the Father's love gift of His Son, Jesus Christ, who bore our sins and paid the penalty due by His sacrifice on the Cross. But right relationship with the Father involves another requisite, and that is, that our hearts shall be right with Him, for " if we regard iniquity in our hearts, the Lord will not hear us " (Psalm 66: 18). Our Heavenly Father wants His children to feel at home with Him, and in order that we may have that assurance, we must confess our sins: " If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness " (1 John 1: 9).

When a child rushes into the father's presence with soiled hands and face and garments, he is admonished to " Go and clean up! " and confession of sin is the " cleaning-up process " for the believer, and must always come before prayer.

Satan hates the saints and he hates prayer and will seek to hinder in every possible way our access to God. Satan's power over believers lies in the fact that we still have an old, sinful nature (*his* nature), and his appeal is to that nature.

As a writer has well said: " Believers who do not exercise power over sin in their daily walk, cannot wield the scepter of power when upon their knees before God in prayer." And as God Himself says in His Word: " Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save; neither his ear

heavy that it cannot hear; but your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear you" (Isaiah 59: 1, 2).

Let us ask ourselves, then: "Are we children of God through faith in Jesus Christ, believing in our hearts and confessing with our lips that He is our Saviour and Sanctifier? Have we, so far as we know, confessed and forsaken all known sin, and had the assurance of the Father's forgiveness?" If the answer is in the affirmative, then the question of *relationship* is settled.

Right Recognition. Having had our relationship thoroughly established through God's grace, we must recognize the solemn obligation which that relationship entails. The Word of God makes very plain the importance of the position which we, as believers, occupy. No earthly honour can be comparable to this. How sad it is, then, when God has made so very plain what the title, "sons of God by faith in Jesus Christ" involves, that so little is accomplished by us! We need to meditate daily, until it becomes real to us, on the truth that we are *empowered ambassadors* from the court of Heaven, awaiting God's orders.

Right Response to God's Requirements. Realizing that we are God's representatives to a lost, sinful, rebellious world; that a great privilege is accorded to us and a great responsibility vested in us; how our hearts should rejoice and our spir-

its respond in joyful acquiescence to our Lord's announcement: "Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

To sum it all up, then: *Preparation for Prayer* calls for heart harmony with God, and that, in turn, involves *confession* of any sin or failure to please Him; *communion* with Him through the indwelling Holy Spirit; *commitment* of ourselves and our desires to Him in full assurance of faith that He knows us and we know Him. He knows our life. He knows our need. He knows our weaknesses. He knows what we are going to ask for. He draws us close and closer to Himself.

We are at home with Him and in harmony with Him. His wings are over us, His arms underneath, and His ear open to our call. Therefore, "in everything, by prayer and supplication, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4: 6, 7).

VII

PLACE AND POSTURE OF PRAYER

"Where prayer was wont to be made" (Acts 16: 3) is the simple, Scriptural statement concerning a river-side, the name of which is not recorded. Situated outside the City of Philippi, the apostle Paul on the Sabbath Day made his way thither, "supposing (according to the Revised Version) to find there a place of prayer."

And there Paul found "a certain woman, named Lydia" who, like Cornelius, worshipped God, and who hearkened "unto the things which were spoken by Paul,"—the Lord having opened her heart to receive the risen Saviour.

"Where prayer was wont to be made!" Ah! some hallowed spot, not necessarily enclosed by walls; perhaps "under the fig-tree," where the Lord Jesus saw Nathanael, the heart may go up to God, longing for a fuller vision of Himself; or a garden walk, oft paced to and fro, where the soul seeks that "counsel which is wonderful" (Isaiah 28: 29); or, as at the fast proclaimed at the river of Ahara, "to seek of God a right way" (Ezra 8: 21).

—*The Morning Star.*

VII

PLACE AND POSTURE OF PRAYER

"I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands."—1 PETER 2:8.

"Now when all the people were baptized, it came to pass, that Jesus also being baptized, and praying, the heaven was opened."—LUKE 3:21.

Child, amidst the flowers at play,
While the red light fades away;
Mother, with thine earnest eye,
Ever following silently;
Father, by the breeze of eve
Called thy harvest work to leave;
Pray, ere yet the dark hours be,
Lift the heart and bend the knee!

Traveller, in the stranger's land,
Far from thine own household band;
Mourner, haunted by the tone,
Of a voice from this world gone;
Captive, in whose narrow cell,
Sunshine hath not leave to dwell;
Sailor, on the darkening sea—
Lift the heart and bend the knee!

—MRS. FELICIA D. HEMANS.

ANY time! Anywhere! Any way! Jesus prayed, as we read in the passage above, while He was being baptized. We do not know *why* He

prayed at that particular time, nor *what* He prayed for, but we learn from the fact that He did pray then, that neither place nor posture have any necessary significance in connection with prayer.

While alive and awake we may pray at any time and at any place. The words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts always are acceptable to God, provided our relationship to God is established and maintained. The *place* of prayer is anywhere and any time; the *posture* may be any posture of the body, but only one posture of the soul, and that is, bowed in humble submission to Him, with the heart lifted in unwavering faith in His promises.

It is, of course, *desirable* to have stated times for prayer, and a place set apart for that purpose, but we must remember that prayer is not *limited* to such times and places. Life, as lived to-day, is vastly different from life in the olden days. This is the day of fast living by every one. In this "land of the free and the home of the brave" most people are really slaves. "Early to bed and early to rise" is a long-lost saying. Now it is "late to bed, a lingering rise and a rush for the morning meal," which is rarely a family meal, but "everybody for themselves"; often not even a bowing of the head at the table to voice a thanksgiving for the food.

At night it is the same thing. Very few families have evening prayers. The wee ones are tucked

away at any hour; children and young people go and come as they please. These are the facts which must be faced. What can be done?

Learn to pray! We may be reading the daily paper and see many sad and sorrowful stories of accidents, failures in business, burglaries, homes destroyed, crimes of all kinds committed, deaths, etc., and it is our privilege to pray for all such.

We walk the street and see sad faces, cripples, blind persons; we see and hear careless, reckless people, no one, perhaps, caring for their souls, and our hearts beat in compassion with them and for them, and we may send a telephone message to God in their behalf.

We have a social call to make and lift our souls to God in prayer that He may be glorified in it, and that He may use us in some way—His own way—to be a blessing to the home visited.

We have a business engagement and as we wend our way to store or office, we pray that He who is our Lord and Master may be wisely represented in the conference or in the business we may transact, and that some good thing—of which, perhaps, we may never know down here—may be accomplished through it.

In fact, "in everything, by prayer and supplication" we should seek to dedicate our lives each day to Him, making the most of every opportunity, our souls filled with joy in each service. Yet in it all we may not have knelt, may have uttered no

formal sentence, but *prayer* has been made, God has been honoured and our own souls have been refreshed.

What a contrast is such a program to the same amount of time spent in worrying, fretting, filling one's self with unkind thoughts, meditation upon trials or troubles long past or anticipated! It is possible to have a " prayer-meeting " all day and every day, touch the throne of God and command His favour and blessing.

To illustrate: While writing these sentences you have just read, an airplane went whizzing overhead, casting a shadow on the windows of the study, and—quick as the mind could act—the writer recalled a story in the morning paper of two aviators who had lost their lives the day before, and his heart went out in prayer for the safety of the occupant of *this* craft, and for the comfort of the friends who had been bereaved in yesterday's accident.

The " closet " of which Jesus speaks in Matthew 6:6: " But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and shut thy door,"—is the closet of the heart of man and the place of communion with God. How quickly *that* " closet " may be entered, the door shut, the noise of the world forgotten, our heart's desire poured out before Him, and the answer given. So it was with Nehemiah: " Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. And

I said unto the king," etc. (Nehemiah 2: 4). In the moment between the king's request and Nehemiah's reply, he had lifted his heart in prayer to "the God of heaven" and his petition was granted. Read the story.

We may make a hundred prayers a day. He records them all. We may never remember them, but He does, and they will all be revealed in due time. What a joy and privilege is ours to "pray without ceasing!"

VIII

POVERTY OF PRAYER

"We are coming to a King; large petitions let us bring." How meagre our asking often is in view of what He is and the measure of His love and liberality toward us. We ask for a loaf when He is able and willing to give great fields of ripened grain! We forget that the measure of our privilege in asking is not the measure of our worthiness, but the measureless measure of God's grace toward us in Christ: "My God shall supply all your need, according to *his riches* in glory."—*The Prayer Watch.*

Blessings that are promised in response to faith-filled prayer, cannot be expected if faith-filled prayer is not offered. Loss stands over against gain in the neglect of the duty and privilege of prayer. . . . There are those who are dear to us, and those whom we hold dear, who are suffering to-day from lack of blessings that would have been theirs had we done our duty in the proffer of faith-filled prayers in their behalf. . . . God forgive us for our lack and loss!

—H. Clay Trumbull, in *Prayer—Its Nature and Scope.*

VIII

POVERTY OF PRAYER

"Ye have not because ye ask not."—JAMES 4: 2.

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him."—MATTHEW 7: 9.

For if thou not to Him aspire,
But to His gifts alone;
Not love, but covetous desire,
Doth bring thee to His throne;
While such thy prayer, it climbs above
In vain; the golden key
Of God's rich treasure-house of love
Thine own will never be.

—SELECTED.

We kneel, how weak! We rise, how full of power!
Why, therefore, should we do ourselves this wrong,
Or others—that we are not always strong,
That we are ever overborne with care
That we should ever weak or heartless be,
Anxious or troubled, when with us is prayer,
And joy and strength and courage are with Thee?

—TRENCH.

"POVERTY" is a relative term, and when used in connection with prayer suggests the contrast between the incomparable possibility of securing things with the meager demonstrated results. It is

a sad and sorrowful confession which most of us are compelled to make when we say: "Alas! how small are the results of my prayer life when placed in comparison with its great possibilities."

Why this Poverty of Prayer when the promise has been given us, "Ask, and it shall be given thee"? When God's books are open and we face the unchangeable record of our Christian life, what a poverty of results will confront us,—children of the richest Father in the universe, a Father who loves to give good gifts to His children and whose heart is sad because of our indifference to His desire to bless us and to use us in the distribution of His mercies and blessings.

Let us face these facts in a practical manner. Is prayer an asset given us by our Lord to be used for His glory? Let us quietly hold that question before us. Was prayer given to be used for our own selfish purposes, or was it intended to be the key to the vault containing untold riches to be ministered in His Name?

Why are we so selfish, so indifferent, so careless? Why is it that our Prayer Lists (if we have any) are largely confined to our own people, our own church, our own interests, and even then not long enough to take more than five minutes of our time, and that often neglected?

Let us not get away from this subject until we have taken time to carefully and prayerfully consider it. The great majority of young people never

go to Sunday School or church. Do we pray for them? Most people are never approached by any one with reference to their spiritual standing and relation to the cross of Christ. Millions of people in our own land, and millions upon millions in other lands, are Christless. Do we ever pray for them? When we read of those who have fallen into sin, do we pray for them? When tornadoes, fires, earthquakes and floods come, do we pray for the needy victims?

God raised up some one to bring *us* to Himself and has put His Word into our hands. We are saved and assured of eternal fellowship with Him. But how about our hearts? Are they tender and compassionate in behalf of the multitudes who are as "sheep without a shepherd"? Listen to the words of our loving Lord: "But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few" (Matthew 9: 36, 37).

Our Lord "went about doing good." He had a heart for the multitudes and longed for their salvation. He gives us a command, "*Pray ye* therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." Are *we* His labourers? Then to us He has given the example and left the command, "*Pray ye!*"

Every day the need for prayer grows greater. The daily blessings which are showered upon us are a call to pray for others. The present day apostasy of ministers and people in the churches is a call from the Crucified, Risen Saviour of men to pray that the poor, deluded people may be delivered from the snare of Satan.

Something must be fundamentally wrong in our lives if we can be content to pray for ourselves and our own loved ones, and be indifferent to the need of a perishing world. If God could have His way with us would He not inspire us to pray? If Christ could have His way with us, would He not say "Pray!" If the Holy Spirit had His way with us would He not woo us to a prayer life? If our eyes were open would they not perceive the appalling need of prayer for a lost world?

Is there not a call for a revival of prayer? If everything else were set aside for a month in the churches that profess to believe in prayer, and a call sent out for God's own people to pray all night, night after night, in unselfish intercession for a lost and needy world, would not the windows of Heaven be opened and a flood tide of prayer possess the people? Would not sinners flock to the altars seeking the Saviour of souls?

Shall we not confess our sin of indifference and cry to God until the refreshing tide of blessing flows in? For we ourselves suffer by reason of the Poverty of Prayer in our own lives. Nothing

is equal to a prayer life for developing spirituality. Every prayer brings us into fellowship with Him who loves to have that fellowship with us, and intensifies it. Prayer is an investment that brings blessing to others and reacts upon ourselves. It enriches us. Prayer pleases our Lord because it is in answer to His command. Prayer is the need of a needy Church for a needy world. As Spurgeon so well puts it: " Prayers are heard in Heaven very much in proportion to our faith; *little* faith will get very great mercies, but *great* faith will obtain still greater."

IX

POWER OF PRAYER

Do you want power in your public ministry? I shall never forget a scene in Tremont Temple, Boston. . . . In those days I was prejudiced against women speaking in public. But I had to follow the program, so announced the name of the woman who was to be the next speaker, sat down, buried my face in my hands, and commenced to pray that God would save the meeting from disaster.

Soon I began to watch as well as pray. That whole audience sat spellbound, every eye riveted on that little woman. Then I saw strong men taking out their handkerchiefs and trying to pretend that they were not crying. Then they threw off all pretence and the tears rained down their cheeks, and before that woman had finished, the whole audience was swept by the power of her words as the trees of our Western forests are swept by a cyclone.

When that marvellous address was over, some of us went to the speaker and said: "God wonderfully used you this morning." She said: "Would you like to know the secret? Last night as I thought of this great audience, and of my utter inexperience in public address, I spent the whole night on my face before God in prayer."

Brethren, when you and I spend more nights on our faces before God in prayer, there will be more days of power when we face our audiences.

—R. A. Torrey, in *Prayer*.

IX

POWER OF PRAYER

"For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding:

That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God.

Strengthened with all might according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness."—COLOSSIANS 1:9–11.

Our Father, our Father, who dwellest in light,
We lean on Thy love and we rest on Thy might;
In weakness and weariness joy shall abound,
For strength everlasting in Thee shall be found.
Our Refuge, our Helper, in conflict and woe,
Our Mighty Defender, how blessed to know,
That Thine is the Power!

Thou knowest our dangers, Thou knowest our frame,
But a tower of strength is Thy glorious Name;
Oh, lead us not into temptation, we pray,
But keep us, and let us not stumble or stray;
Thy children shall under Thy shadow abide,
In Thee as our Guide, and our Shield to confide,
For Thine is the Power!
—FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL.

HERE is a very practical prayer from the lips of the great Apostle. We call him "great" and he

was, and he became great through great trials and testings; because he had a great revelation from Heaven when he was stricken blind by the manifestation of the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ from Heaven; because he had great experiences with God in answer to prayer; and here we find him praying for the Colossians that they might be "strengthened with *all power* according to the might of his glory."

What a wonderful prayer for the saints! Were Paul praying for us to-day would he not be making the same petition? Do we not need this prayer in our behalf? Do we not need to reiterate it constantly? Do we not seek the constant renewal of strength for our bodies day by day, as we use and utilize it in His service? We are wise if we use all practical methods for the proper care of the body, lest there be unnecessary waste and depletion; but are we as wise regarding the needs of the spiritual life?

How comprehensive is the word "all" as used here by Paul: "*All* spiritual wisdom; walking worthy unto *all* pleasing; with *all* might and *all* patience and longsuffering." This includes every service to which the Lord may call us.

As we meditate on this theme of the "all-power" of prayer, let us remember that the power comes from Him whose we are and whom we are to serve. The exercise of this power, of course, is dependent upon conditions. We must not only be

connected with the power-house, but the channel must be kept free. The Lord is not only always ready to send the power through, but He longs to do so. The limitation lies with us, with our capacity for receiving and using.

The word "power" as used here, means "sovereign sway," and is always associated, in the New Testament, with the power of God. We have the privilege of "*being* strengthened," *i. e.*, a *daily* strengthening. Our natures are naturally weak, and they are further weakened by the daily toil and stress, but the power of God can fill us constantly and keep us well rounded men and women.

It is to this power we must turn as we pray. His glorious power! His unfailing power! His promised power! Shall we not then prepare ourselves to pray in the power of the Holy Spirit, so that, as Paul admonishes us in Ephesians 1: 19: "We may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints. And what is the exceeding *greatness of his power* to us-ward who believe, according to the *working of his mighty power*."

What is the "exceeding greatness of his power"? We can only know through the exercise of faith as He inspires us. The weakness of our faith is the obstruction which blocks the stream of power which is flowing from God to us. The Psalmist says: "He turneth rivers into a wilderness and the water springs into dry ground; a fruit-

ful land into barrenness, *for the wickedness* of them that dwell therein" (Psalm 107: 33). *But,* He also "turneth the wilderness into standing water, and dry ground into water springs" (Psalm 107: 35).

There is a challenge here—a challenge to every child of God, and especially to every Christian leader. It is not an easy thing to be a real leader for Christ. It is a position fraught with tremendous responsibilities and consequences. No one should seek it unless called and equipped with His promise who has said: "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

Prayer is a power that reaches Heaven itself, reaches the ends of the earth. It has no limits save those which He Himself has fixed. Let us consider the subject loyally, lovingly and yield ourselves to the power of the Holy Spirit that we may have real "Power in Prayer."

X

PROTECTION OF PRAYER

There is constant need to claim the protection of God in the prayer life. . . . But that protection is not to be taken for granted in a spirit of fatalism. The power of God operates conditionally upon the exercise of intelligence and faith.

No Divine promise ever becomes valid apart from the individual coöperation of the believer: "I the Lord do keep it; I will water it every moment; lest any hurt it, I will keep it day and night" (Isaiah 27:3). The Word of God cannot be broken. "Wherefore, take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand" (Ephesians 6:13).

"Neither give place to the devil" is apostolic advice. . . . If Satan can touch the body and rush the Christian into an accident; if he can oppress him through circumstances and burden his spirit, shutting it up in a prison of passivity, so that he has neither the power nor the desire to resist and pray,—these things he will do and thus rob the Lord Jesus Christ of the fruits of His victory.

The call, therefore, is to claim, moment by moment, through a definite act of faith, all the protection there is to be found in the Divine armoury, and to choose that only the will of God shall be done.

—GORDON WATT, in *The Strategic Value of Prayer.*

X

PROTECTION OF PRAYER

"The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. . . . He forgetteth not the cry of the humble."—PSALM 9:9, 12.

"They cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses. He sent his word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions."—PSALM 107:19, 20.

Though destruction walk around us,
Though the arrows past us fly;
Angel-guards from Thee surround us,
We are safe if Thou art nigh.

Should swift Death this night o'ertake us,
And our couch become our tomb,
May the morn in Heaven awake us,
Clad in bright and deathless bloom.

—SELECTED.

WE live in a sin-wrecked world. Satan is the world-ruler. He hates God. He hates Christ. He hates the Holy Spirit. He hates the Bible. He hates Spirit-born men and women. He loves to tease and torment the Lord's people. He loves to spoil their lives. He can never separate any real believer from the love of God, nor from His unfailing promises, but he does exult in his ability

to fill our minds with questions concerning the strange events that cross our pathway.

His game is insidious and insulting. He always has a question mark to hold up before us. "Where is your Saviour?" "Why are you sick?" "Why are you poor?" "Why do you have so many trials?" "Why does your Lord permit it all?" Thus he suggests doubts, while screening the consequences of doubt. He never ceases day nor night to plant pitfalls for the backslider.

But the Christian life is a new life, a Heavenly life, a life of fellowship with the risen Lord, a life of confidence and trust in the unfailing promises of God.

Notice the many promises of protection in the Ninety-first Psalm: "He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust. His truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid of the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day. . . . For he shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. . . . Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him. . . . He shall call upon me, and I will answer him. I will be with him in trouble; I will deliver him. . . . With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation."

Note, too, how the Lord Jesus Christ warns those who would despise one of His own: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones;

for I say unto you, that in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven" (Matthew 18: 10).

The angels are His ministering spirits: "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Hebrews 1: 14).

Daniel prayed loyally to God three times a day, and was thrust by the king into the lions' den because of it. (Daniel 6: 18–24.) But the king fasted all night in anxiety for his highly honoured and beloved Daniel, and in the morning his heart was made glad by Daniel's joyful message, "O king, live forever! My God hath sent his angel and hath shut the lions' mouths that they have not hurt me!" Now turn to the ninth chapter of Daniel and read the entire chapter which tells the wonderful story of God's answer to Daniel's prayer for the protection of Israel: "O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not for thine own sake, O my God; for thy city and thy people are called by thy name."

Did not God deliver Jacob from the hand of Esau in answer to his prayer: "Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children" (Genesis 32: 11). We are so often helpless and in such definite need! What can we do? Plead the promise in Psalm 34: 17: "The righteous cry,

and the Lord heareth, and delivereth them out of all their troubles."

Who are the righteous? Those who are in right relation with God. "The face of the Lord is against them that do evil," but His ear is ever open to those who are seeking to live the life that He has outlined for His children.

We who are parents hear the cry of our children and quickly respond, but no human love is comparable to Divine love. He loves to hear and He loves to respond. "And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear" (Isaiah 65: 24).

He has His eye upon us all the time. "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father" (Matthew 10: 29). It grieves His heart when we fail to love Him and depend upon Him for protection and provision.

One of the greatest snares of prosperity is the self-confidence which it begets in our own resources and ability. That is why the Lord so often forces us into a place of absolute dependence upon Himself. Then we are children again, leaning upon His arm for protection and resting on His unfailing promises. "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."

XI

PERFUNCTORY PRAYER

I saw a little girl come out of a house the other day, bitterly crying. Her mother had denied her request, and she was wailing, "I want a doll carriage! I want a doll carriage! I want a doll carriage!" But as she walked on the petition grew more and more indistinct, and as she turned and walked beside me, it was with only a half-hearted cry, "I want! I want!" Finally, as I faced her, it had shortened into a bewildered "I! I!" I looked into her little tear-stained face and asked, "What is it you want, my little girl?" She gazed at me blankly for a moment, and then, rubbing her little fist into her eye, she smiled shamefacedly, and replied, "I—don't—know!" How like that little one we often are in our petitions to our Heavenly Father.—SELECTED.

XI

PERFUNCTORY PRAYER

"This people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me."—ISAIAH 29: 13.

"Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss."
—JAMES 4: 3.

I often say my prayers;
But do I really pray?
And do the wishes of my heart
Go with the words I say?

I may as well kneel down
And worship gods of stone,
As offer to the living God
A prayer of words alone.

For words without the heart
The Lord will never hear;
Nor will He to those lips attend
Whose prayers are not sincere.
—JOHN BURTON.

IT seems almost sacrilegious even to use the word "perfunctory" in connection with a theme so sacred as that of prayer, and yet, we are creatures of habit and too often our habits are careless, listless and perfunctory; and when such a habit is associated with prayer it tends to degrade what should be the highest, holiest relationship of our spiritual life.

"Perfunctory" means careless, indifferent, mechanical. No doubt we are all guilty of this sort of praying, more or less, and it may be that the Holy Spirit will use this meditation to rebuke us and give us a new conception of the danger of falling into this grievous sin.

Prayer includes fellowship, worship, dependence and gratitude. If we are praying in public, we must use words to express our thoughts, and we are apt to be occupied with wondering how they sound, whether the language is appropriate, etc., the result being a tendency to become stereotyped, lifeless, meaningless,—a prayer from the head and not from the heart. A consciousness that we can make "eloquent" (!) prayers may result in making merely "perfunctory" prayers. If we could only forget that men are listening and remember only that God is listening, what a difference it would make.

Is it possible for private prayer, also, to become perfunctory? Alas, yes! For when prayer is regarded as a *duty* rather than a *privilege,* it often leads to perfunctory prayer. We promise to pray for some one or some thing. It is easy to make the promise, but it is just as easy to forget or overlook it, and when remembered, it is easy to do it in a professional, perfunctory way,—glad when it is over!

There are certain conditions which must be recognized in real prayer: We must be right with

God—in His will—or our prayers can be nothing else than perfunctory. A set time and place for prayer is very desirable, but it may mean nothing if we simply go to the place and go through with the performance. Such prayer is pitifully powerless, an insult to God and an injury to the one who offers it.

What is the remedy for perfunctory prayer? Avoid stilted phrases. Talk to God in the language of your heart-life. Pour out your soul to Him. "Practise the presence of Christ." Be real, for God is real. Be true, for God is true. Open your heart, for God has a heart. Then fellowship and communion with Him will be sweet. That is what He longs for. He loves us! He loves to answer our prayers! Does it not give us real pleasure to minister to those we love? Surely it does. Then how much more does it give joy to His great heart to "give good things to them that ask him" if they ask aright.

Real prayer is the most simple, practical thing in the world. It is a wish, a desire, an intercession, a supplication. It is just linking our lives up with Him, longing in all things to glorify Him, dying to self, dedicating all to Him. In such an atmosphere Perfunctory Prayer disappears and real prayer lives like a breath of the soul.

XII

PREVAILING PRAYER

In 1872 Mr. Moody went to London to rest. While resting, he was over-persuaded to preach for one Sabbath. The place seemed cold and dead, and Mr. Moody himself only half up to the mark. But, while preaching, he suddenly awoke to find the atmosphere charged with the Spirit of God. . . . A work of grace began then and there. Hundreds were brought into the church.

What was the secret of all this? A friend tells it: "There were two sisters belonging to that church, one strong and the other bedridden. One day as the sick woman was bemoaning her condition, the thought came to her that she could pray, and she did begin to pray that God would revive the Church, but the Church remained cold and dead. Reading of Mr. Moody's meetings in America, she asked God to send him some day to her church. When her sister returned home from the morning service she said: 'Who do you think preached for us to-day? Mr. Moody, from America.' The invalid turned pale and said, 'I know that means God has answered my prayer.' All that afternoon she fasted and prayed, and with the evening service came the answer in fire from Heaven."

Perhaps few in London knew the woman even existed; but God knew, and, in answer to her prayer, brought a Pentecost to that church.

—*Prayer, as a Working Force.*

XII

PREVAILING PRAYER

"And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."

—GENESIS 32: 28.

There are noble Christian workers,
The men of faith and power;
The overcoming wrestlers
Of many a midnight hour;
Prevailing princes with their God,
Who will not be denied;
Who bring down showers of blessing,
To swell the rising tide.
The Prince of darkness quaileth
At their triumphant way;
Their fervent prayer availeth,
To sap his subtle sway.

There are ministers unlettered,
Not of earth's great or wise,
Yet mighty and unfettered,
Their eagle prayers arise.
Free of the Heavenly storehouse,
They hold the master-key
That opens all the fulness
Of God's great treasury.
They bring the needs of others,
And all things are their own,
For their one grand claim is Jesus' Name,
Before their Father's throne.

—HAVERGAL.

VICTORY in prayer is possible and should be expected. Mighty works have been wrought through prayer. Who could place a limit on the "whatsoever" of Christ when He says, "Whatsoever ye ask . . . that will I do"?

There are, of course, many conditions which may affect the fulfillment of that "whatsoever" but the possibility is still there. When the hand of the child reaches up to the hand of the father for help, all the strength and power of that father will be exerted in behalf of his child. So there is a link which binds us to our Father in Heaven which has Almighty possibilities, and that link is *faith* in His promises.

Here we must recognize what is involved in "faith," but no believer should ever question what faith is capable of producing. How strange that our faith should waver even after many experiments and experiences of its power. Stop and think for a moment of the mighty works which have been wrought through faith! Read the eleventh chapter of Hebrews for some practical Scriptural illustrations.

Are there no limitations? Only one,—"What is God's will?" And remember that God gives the "whatsoever" as the great incentive for prayer, and that the exercise of faith in that promise and its fulfillment is God's method of inspiring and increasing our faith. How many times God has to say to us, as He did to the disciples, "O ye

of little faith! " when He would always love to say instead, " According to your faith be it unto you."

Our human nature shrinks from the test of great faith if it involves any sacrifice on our part, though we love to read of what has been done by others. Look, for instance, at Elijah on Mount Carmel. What a test of the possibilities of God! It is a question of Elijah or Baal, and that is always the question. Elijah knew the king was searching for him that he might put him to death, but in spite of that he sent for Ahab and gave him the challenge. It was to be a public exhibition of the possibility of commanding the power of God.

The gathering included the hosts of Israel and the prophets of Baal. What chance could there be for a poor prophet of Jehovah against such a company? Would you not have enjoyed seeing the man of God facing his foes and laughing them to scorn; standing alone for Jehovah throughout the day, hearing the unanswered prayers of the false prophets; and then, when evening came, lifting his voice in prayer: " Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God and that thou hast turned their heart back again."

THEN the fire of the Lord fell and " consumed the burnt sacrifice and the wood and the stones and the dust and licked up the water that was in

the trench," at the command of *ONE* man! Yes, *one man* in the hand and will of God, challenging the king and the multitude and causing the humanly impossible to come to pass.

Why was this demonstration necessary? To prove that God hears and answers prayer. Would it not be a great thing to-day, if, in the midst of an unbelieving world and a doubting Church, Almighty God our Father could have an opportunity to demonstrate His unfailing presence and power, and thus awaken the sleepy saints to a consciousness of His unchanging purpose and power to answer the prayers of His believing children?

Read again the account of how Jacob prevailed with God in prayer in Genesis 32: 13–23. We all know the story of his meeting with his brother Esau, after so many years, and of Jacob's plan to propitiate him. He knew Esau and he knew that Esau had just cause to hate him. He could not believe that his brother intended anything but harm when he heard that he was advancing to meet him with four hundred men, and so he first *planned* and then *prayed,* just as we so often do. Indeed, most of our mistakes come from planning first.

Jacob's prayer for deliverance from his brother had many of the elements of true prayer (Genesis 32: 9–12). He pleaded with God as the covenant-keeping God; he confessed his own unworthiness,

God's faithfulness and his own great and desperate need; but his prayer lacked confession of sin, submission to God's will and real faith in God's power. It was not *prevailing* prayer. That was to come later.

He still planned and schemed. He looked to God and then used diplomacy. He believed God, but he could not trust Him, though Jehovah had fulfilled His promise to him, and brought him back to the land (Genesis 28: 15). But God did not fail Jacob, in spite of his unbelief, though He had to teach him the lesson of a surrendered will. "Jacob, the Supplanter" must be broken down and his will must surrender to God's will before he can become "Israel, the Prince."

It was an all night struggle, and it is always night for those who are fighting God's will. As the morning dawned, God struck Jacob's thigh (the seat of physical force for a wrestler) but Jacob still held on and pleaded for a blessing, for he had recognized his Adversary. "Yea, he had power over the angel and prevailed; he wept, and made supplication unto him" (Hosea 12: 4).

Jacob struggled until he came to the end of self and then he had the joy of hearing those wonderful words, so full of infinite meaning: "Thy name shall no more be called Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed."

Nothing pleases God more than to have us come

to Him in holy boldness, pleading His own promises. Paul called upon the Roman Church to unite with him in prevailing prayer: "Now, I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together in your prayers to God for me" (Romans 15: 30). The meaning of "strive" here is to "agonize together," and this is always the mark of real persistent, insistent, prevailing prayer. God is glorified in all we ask from Him in Jesus' precious Name: "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it, that the Father may be glorified in the Son" (John 14: 14).

XIII

PRIVATE PRAYER

Prayer is to the spiritual life what air is to the physical. Make it a rule never to see the face of man until you have seen the face of God. Each day is a new life; make sure of a good beginning. The devil may be so thoroughly beaten in the morning, that his assaults will be feeble all the rest of the day. . . .

We should finish each day as we begin it—on our knees. Be men and women of prayer. None are eminent for piety and usefulness who neglect this duty. All who would win great victories for God in public, must first prevail in the solitude of their own chambers.

—THOMAS COOK.

The early Christians in Africa were earnest and regular in their devotions, and each had a separate spot in the bush to which he went to pray. The paths to these "Bethels" became distinctly marked, and when any began to decline in the prayer habit, it was soon manifest to his fellows, who would remind him of his duty by saying, "Brother, the grass grows on your path yonder!"—SELECTED.

XIII

PRIVATE PRAYER

"But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly."—MATTHEW 6:6.

"Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray."
—PSALM 55:17.

Oh, the pure delight of a single hour,
That before Thy throne I spend;
When I kneel in prayer, and with Thee, my God,
I commune as friend with friend.

There are depths of love that I cannot know,
Till I cross the narrow sea;
There are heights of joy that I may not reach,
Till I rest in peace with Thee.

Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
To the cross where Thou hast died;
Draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord,
To Thy precious bleeding side.
—FANNY J. CROSBY.

IN taking up this theme the writer has a consciousness of the tremendous consequences allied with it. It is easy to tell people how they should live, but not so easy to obey the rules one's self; and the age in which we live, the conditions which

control us, the perplexities which confront us, all combine to make it more and more difficult for any one to follow certain programs which were once so familiar.

For instance, we used to say: "A place, a time, a schedule for prayer." Or, "A place—your closet; a posture—on your knees; a program—certain names and objects." But the trend and turmoil of daily life make it hard for many of God's children in these days to follow such a plan, though we commend it wherever possible,—morning, noon and night,—a prayer list, with names of persons and things for which to pray.

Men of God, who have been the outstanding illustrations of power in prayer, were able to spend hours at a time on their knees. We do not hear much of that kind of praying in these days, and the result is manifest in Christian life and activities. Even ministers seem to find it difficult to have a prayer hour, and the Church is suffering and individual Christians are suffering as a consequence.

The real gauge of a Christian life is the prayer gauge. In other chapters of this little volume we have commented on many different phases of prayer, but "Private Prayer" gets at the very heart of the whole subject, as well as at the hearts of the saints.

Night is all right for private prayer, provided one is not too wearied and tired with the conflict

of the day; but the morning hours are far better, if one can gird themselves with the courage to rise, read the Word, commune with God, then take the prayer list and lift the heart with sincere desire for the persons and things and objects recorded thereon.

Private prayer is the sweetest, holiest, happiest form of fellowship which the believer can have with his Lord. It is not necessarily confined to any set time or place. It is a part of one's very life. You may be walking on the street. You see a face; you sense a need; you pray!

You are riding on a street car. You are conscious of the fact that some of your fellow-passengers are in need of God's grace and favour. You scan their faces and send up a petition. Or, perhaps, you take out your prayer list and occupy yourself with that.

You sit in the church and, as you look at those around you, your heart goes out in sympathy for them and you lift your prayers for them to the Throne of Grace. You pray for the pastor and his message and thus have a share in the results.

As you read the daily papers and are confronted with the sad record of crimes, accidents, catastrophes, affecting nations, communities, individuals, —you cannot but lift your heart to God in prayer for them.

Though it may not be possible to spend the whole day or the whole night in prayer in answer

to the calls that come to us, it is possible to intercede with Him who dwells within our hearts, who loves to respond to our prayers, and who keeps a record of them in His "Book of Remembrance" (Malachi 3: 16).

But above and beyond all this, there *is* a time of Private Prayer which is precious. When the door is closed and we are separated from the busy crowd, from the noise, from the cares and burdens—alone with Him who loves us with an everlasting love, who longs for our heart fellowship—we pour out from our lips our love for Him, our joy in belonging to Him, our thanksgiving for His care and blessing through the day. And, then, with our head upon His breast, tell out the secrets of our heart which He knows but which He loves to have us bring to Him, present our requests for those whom we carry upon our hearts, and—best of all—have the consciousness of His pierced Hand upon our head and hear His voice of comfort and assurance of help in every time of need.

Such a time of Private Prayer fills our souls with such unutterable bliss that we long for the next appointment of sacred fellowship with our loving Lord.

XIV

PUBLIC PRAYER

Long, discursive, dry and inane are the prayers made in many pulpits. Without unction or heart, they fall like a killing frost on all the graces of worship. The deader they are, the longer they grow. A plea for short praying, live praying, real heart-praying, praying by the Holy Spirit,—direct, specific, ardent, simple, unctuous,—in the pulpit, is in order. A school to teach preachers how to pray, as God counts praying, would be more beneficial to true piety, true worship and true preaching, than all the theological schools.

Stop! Pause! Consider! What are we doing? Praying to God, the *great* God, the Maker of all worlds, the Judge of all men! What reverence, what simplicity, what sincerity, what "truth in the inward parts" is demanded! How real we must be! How hearty!

—E. M. Bounds.

Talmage suggested that many public prayers would be better and more helpful if we cut off a bit from each end, and then set fire to the middle.—Selected.

XIV

PUBLIC PRAYER

"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers."—ACTS 2:42.

"I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also."—1 CORINTHIANS 14:15.

'Tis the blessed hour of prayer,
When our hearts lowly bend;
And we gather to Jesus,
Our Saviour and Friend;
If we come to Him in faith,
His protection to share,
What a balm for the weary!
O how sweet to be there!

—W. H. DOANE.

FEW people pray in public in these days. "Public Prayer" is largely relegated to the preacher or the leader of a service. The "Midweek Meeting" of a church is usually called a "Prayer-meeting," it is true, but not many such are really prayer-meetings in the old-time meaning of the word, for the time is largely taken up by some sort of discourse, lecture, discussion of church policies and finances, or even—more's the pity!—moving pictures.

The atmosphere in a public gathering is not usually conducive to making the right sort of an appeal to our Father in Heaven, for the temptation is to desire to " make a good impression " on the people. To illustrate: The writer listened recently to a church service which was being broadcasted over the radio. The pastor was praying. He told the Lord many things (which the Lord already knew, of course), and then reiterated many of them. The prayer lasted about ten minutes, but there was no unction, and one could not but feel that it was without any real heart—purely " perfunctory prayer."

On the contrary, I have in my library three volumes of " Prayers by John Wanamaker,"—the matchless merchant prince who for fifty years was the Superintendent of the famous Bethany Sunday School in Philadelphia. These prayers were offered by himself in the Sunday School and not one of them would take more than a minute and a half to utter, and many not more than half a minute. Here are two of them, which will suggest the kind of public prayers which have a real heart appeal and which can be followed by the hearers:

" O Lord, we thank Thee for the manifestation of Thy love in the gift of Thy Son for our redemption, and we thank Thee that through Him there is forgiveness to be found for the sins of the past and grace for days to come. Cleanse us from all

that is displeasing in Thy sight, and fill us with Thy Holy Spirit, so that we may be efficient in service and pure in motive.

Keep us from seeking great things for ourselves and give us grace so that we may be willing to do the little things for Thee. Enable us to realize that there is nothing small in Thy sight, when done in Thy Name. O, Thou Keeper of Israel, keep us until we shall enter into the fulness of Thy joy. Amen."

"O Thou, who was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities; who took our chastisement to purchase peace for us, by whose stripes we are healed; by Thy blessed Spirit reveal this mystery to our hearts.

Spirit of the living God, Father and Son, we bless Thee for the mystery and miracle of Thy love. Leave us not in the darkness of unbelief and little faith. Let us not be poverty-stricken and small minded in littleness of revealed knowledge.

Teach us to find our wings that we may find the gate of the morning light, and faith at the fountain opened in the House of David, that we may be cleansed from sin and uncleanness through the atoning sacrifice of Thy Son.

Hear our prayer and grant an answer for Christ's sake. Amen."

Too often the mistake is made of asking some person to lead in prayer who is not in the spirit of prayer. This, if possible, should be guarded against. Then, again, if the pastor or leader of a service says: "Will some one lead in prayer?"

there are apt to be those present who like to be heard in public and who will seize the opportunity to rise and pray and will go on and on, roaming all over the universe, using favourite words and phrases, well-known but usually meaningless,—priding himself on the ability to "make an eloquent prayer"; with no realization that he is talking to God and all that this involves, but just wanting to "fill up the time" and rejoicing in the ability to use words.

Under such circumstances, if the leader would say: "We are going to unite in prayer. Will you all bow your heads and quietly wait upon the Lord?" and, then, after a few moments, himself voice a heart appeal, the hearts of the people would be united in a real spirit of prayer and the proper atmosphere created.

It is well, also, to state the object or objects for which prayer is to be made. Unless this is done, the prayers are apt to be vague and indefinite. If it is desired to pray for the infilling of the Holy Spirit, say so! If for unity of heart and spirit, say so! If it is to render thanksgiving and praise for mercies received, say so!

If any are present who are known to be "long pray-ers," it is well to suggest that one, or, perhaps, two or three short definite prayers for the object desired, be made. The leader might say: "Let us be brief here, and then bring the matter before the Lord, at length, when we reach home."

This might bring sorrow to the "long pray-ers," but it would gladden the hearts of the people.

To sum it all up,—public prayer, whether by preacher or by people, should be distinct, deliberate, devoted. Let us remember that we are talking to God and voicing a petition to Him on behalf of the hearers. Public prayer is a solemn thing, freighted with tremendous possibilities, provided we are praying in real faith and asking for those things which, if granted, will bring results which will be for the glory of God and the blessing of many people.

XV

PARDON THROUGH PRAYER

The first illustration in the Old Testament which shows the faith of wicked men in prayer and their appeal for a man of God to intercede for them with God, is in the case of the fiery serpents sent upon the Israelites when they were journeying from Mount Hor by way of the Red Sea, when they spoke against God and against Moses after this fashion: "Wherefore have ye brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread."

The thing so sorely displeased God that He sent fiery serpents among the people, and many of the people of Israel died: "Therefore the people came to Moses and said, We have sinned because we have spoken against the Lord and against thee; pray unto the Lord, that he take the serpents away from us." And Moses did pray for the people, and God hearkened and answered. . . . Sad is the day in a Christian land, not only where there is the decay of prayer in the Church, but where sinners are so unaffected by the life of the Church that they have no faith in prayer and care little about the prayers of praying men.

—E. M. Bounds, in *Prayer and Praying Men.*

XV

PARDON THROUGH PRAYER

"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions."

—PSALM 51: 1.

Thy mercy doth from age to age endure,
To Thee, Lord God, belongeth mercies sure;
To us, confusion, and a speechless tongue,
Our sins so many are, Lord, we are dumb.

We thank Thee for Christ's robe of righteousness,
And for Thy love which comes to us to bless;
For daily mercies, manifold each day,
Oh give us grace more humbly to obey!

Our grateful hearts do praise and magnify,
And pray, dear Lord, that Thou wilt purify
And make our hearts and lives all they should be,
That they show forth Thy love, so rich and free.

—INA SINCLAIR.

EVERY child of God should often read and meditate upon the entire Fifty-first Psalm, for it reveals God's order for the backslider,—first, a consciousness of personal sin, and then, a confession of that sin. Sin always separates from God's family, but confession restores to fellowship (1 John 1: 9).

David had been a great sinner. Sin is always to be measured by the light in which it is committed. Those who have the full light of God's Word will be judged according to that light. A sin committed in this twentieth century, in this enlightened land of ours, is far more heinous than the same sin in David's day.

David was under deep conviction concerning his sins. They weighed heavily on his heart. After fifty years of honourable life he had fallen into the basest of sins—adultery and murder. For a year after he had kept silence. Then God sent His servant, Nathan, to put his finger upon the sin and say, " Thou art the man! "

What we need to-day is a prophet who will come with a message from God. There is a call to the Church to gather for fasting and prayer and confession of sin. The nation needs it. The Church at large needs it. Every individual church needs it. Every member of every church needs it. " Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much " (James 5: 16).

Note the ascending scale in David's plea for pardon: " Have *mercy* upon me, O God . . . according unto the *multitude* of *thy tender mercies*." A great sinner needs a great Saviour, and *many* sins need a *multitude* of tender mercies. We were *all* born in sin and shapen in iniquity (Psalm 51: 5).

There is no possible denial of this fact, and what is needed is to face the truth instead of seeking to ignore it as we are so apt to do.

David did not plead any merits of his own although he was a king and had wrought wonderful things for God. He was not like one of the up-to-date Modernists, or Christian Scientists or Unitarians,—but just a poor, degraded, debased sinner coming to God with an honest confession that he deserved only His wrath, as he confessed in another Psalm: "I acknowledge my sin unto thee, and mine iniquity have I not hid. I said, I will confess my transgression unto the Lord; and thou forgavest the iniquity of my sin" (Psalm 32: 5).

David used three different terms to indicate his guilt: "*Sin,*" which is, literally, "missing the mark"; "*iniquity,*" which is "moral distortion"; "*transgression,*" which means "passing a boundary." His prayer was not only a prayer of repentance, but a plea for restoration. Note the phrases in verses five to twelve: "Wash me;" "cleanse me;" "purge me;" "create a new heart;" "renew a right spirit;" "restore my joy;" "wash me whiter than snow."

That he sincerely desired to be right with God is evident from the thoroughness of his confession. He knew that God desired truth in the inward part (1 Samuel 16: 7). There is only one thing that can cleanse sin—the blood of God's Son; and the blood sacrifice of David's day spoke always

of the blood of the Lamb of God: "Behold, the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1: 29).

Believers are children of a Heavenly Father. He is a true Father and He loves us, but He insists upon our righting all wrong-doing by, first, confession, and then, as far as possible, reparation for the wrong done. So David not only confessed his sin and pleaded for restoration, but promised God that he would make reparation by becoming a soul-winner. He had been short on service to God. He had been playing with fire, seeking personal satisfaction and gratification rather than seeking to glorify God. He had been stealing from God the honour due to Him. Now he proposed to get back to his legitimate business.

Deep experiences are conducive to the largest helpfulness to others. Through them we learn to sympathize. We learn the heart of God. Spurgeon well says: "None instruct so well as those who have been experimentally taught themselves." David wanted to be assured of acceptance with God, and of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in his life, before he tried to teach others the way of salvation. He remembered that the Spirit departed from Saul (1 Samuel 16: 14) and he did not want to have that experience himself. It is useless to seek to convert others until we ourselves have been turned from our sins. Here is a great lesson for the soul winner.

XVI

PEACE THROUGH PRAYER

That prayer which does not succeed in moderating our wishes—in changing our passionate desire into still submission; the anxious, tumultuous expectation into silent surrender,—is no true prayer, and proves that we have not the *spirit* of true prayer.—F. W. ROBERTSON.

I am not saying that all people are equally agreeable. Of course, every one knows that would not be true. There seems, for instance, to have been a special tie between our Lord and Peter, James and John,—not because they were better than the other disciples, but because—no doubt—they possessed natural qualities which made them more sympathetic and helpful. . . .

But if we murmur and complain when we ought to pray, difficulties will continue, increase and sometimes grow to such dimensions that they will destroy the peace of churches, communities and alienate hearts forever.

There is a blessing pronounced upon the peace-maker, and if we cannot ourselves aspire to the blessing of the peace-*maker* we ought at least to attain to the blessing of the peace-*keeper*. If there is prayer such as there ought to be, this will be true in our lives.

—CHARLES A. BLANCHARD, in
Getting Things From God.

XVI

PEACE THROUGH PRAYER

"There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked."
—ISAIAH 48:22.

"Be careful for nothing; but in everything, by prayer and supplication, let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."—PHILIPPIANS 4:6, 7.

Come, ye disconsolate, where'er ye languish;
Come to the Mercy Seat, fervently kneel;
Here bring your wounded hearts, here tell your anguish;
Earth has no sorrow that Heaven cannot heal.

Joy of the desolate, light of the straying,
Hope of the penitent, fadeless and pure;
Here speaks the Comforter, tenderly saying,
"Earth has no sorrow that Heaven cannot cure."
—THOMAS MOORE.

SIN spoiled the world and the lives of the children of men. Peace is an unknown quantity to the unsaved, and, alas, how often also to those who are the children of God, but who are not in His will.

Unrest is an undesirable asset, but there is a sovereign remedy for it in those who have faith to lay hold of God's gracious promise. This old

nature of ours is hard to control. The love for our own way in everything; the greed for gain and for the things of this world; the pitiful pride that inclines us to follow in the path of worldly leaders; the ambition for places of prominence; the love of ease and failure to keep ourselves in the will of God,—all conspire to a life of unrest. But for all those who are willing to be in His will there is relief and it is found in the passage quoted above (Philippians 4: 6, 7).

"Be careful for nothing,"—not *careless,* but careful to obey His admonitions, while giving no unnecessary care to those things which have a tendency to separate us from Himself. Our Lord knows all about human life, for when He was here He toiled at the carpenter's bench. He had the practical experience and set us the possible example. We are a part of Him now—bone of His bone and flesh of His flesh—and we are to have no undue care about things, for He is able to supply every need, to assist us in every trial of faith, to comfort us in every sorrow. "Casting all your care upon him, for he careth for you" (1 Peter 5: 7).

Of course He cares for us, for we are as dear to Him as the apple of His eye. He loves us, though the devil hates us, and walks about as a roaring lion seeking to devour us. But we have a God-given refuge "the peace of God which passeth all understanding." Note that this is not "peace *with*

God." *That* peace was made through the shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 5: 1) when the sin question was settled and our salvation purchased and declared. But the "peace *of* God" is that peace which is His and which He bestows upon His blood-bought children. God knows no unrest, no disquiet. This is something that the human mind cannot comprehend, but can experience.

Worry is foreign to and unnecessary in the life of a true child of God. We are in God's *plan,* and if we are in God's *place, i. e.,* where He wants us to be, how can we worry? Worry cannot help us or add anything to our power or ability to cope with difficulties.

Then, too, worry is actually sinful, for when we worry we distrust God. Faith never worries, but unbelief does. Faith works joy in our souls. Worry unfits us for service and creates doubts in others. Satan uses worry to weaken us and bring reproach upon our Christian profession. Thousands of God's children have worried their way into the grave.

What is God's recipe for worry? "Prayerful in everything." Prayer brings us into His presence. We can come to Him with every burden and any burden. We seek peace of heart? He says, "Come unto me and I will give you rest." If we are sick—let us come! If we lack wisdom—come! We are encouraged to come to Him in every time

of emergency: "If I shut up heaven that there be no rain, or if I command the locusts to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among my people; if my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; then will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land" (2 Chronicles 7: 13, 14).

God *always* answers prayer when it is made by one who is in right relationship with Him. Sceptics may scorn and scientists sneer, but *we know!* Jesus intercedes, the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, we kneel and clasp His feet, He faileth not! We have the promise and faith gives us the assurance of peace: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans 14: 17).

Note these three words: "righteousness" (being right with God); "peace" (the peace of God that passeth all human understanding); and "joy in the Holy Ghost,"—a trinity which assures *perfect* peace.

How will our souls be garrisoned? By holy angels. They are our protectors if we, through prayer, place everything in God's hands in full assurance of faith that He will work out His own good will, and that "He is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think."

There is nothing which concerns our spiritual life which is of greater import than this. Our God

is a God of peace. Over and over again in the Epistles, Paul's prayer for the saints is " Grace be unto you and *peace,* from God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." A restless Christian is a sad comment upon the power of Christ. Of course, there is no peace or prospect of peace for the world: " Evil men shall wax worse and worse," but in the midst of it all, " He will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on him."

Pray for peace, if you have it not, and may our Lord's word be verified to us all: " Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."

XVII

PLENTY THROUGH PRAYER

"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Ephesians 6: 18). This is the way Christians ought to live. They should pray always and they should pray about everything,—about all their physical needs, their eyes, their teeth, their lungs, their hearts, their rheumatism, headaches, heartaches, everything! They should pray for their children, for their bodies, for their minds, for their hearts. They should pray for them when they go to school that they may be delivered from trains and cars, from evil companions, and that they may be helped in the performance of their work.

There is *nothing* which concerns a Christian which is a matter of indifference to God. If we do not pray we will not have the things we need, even though we are Christians; and many Christians do not pray, and few pray for the things which God would gladly give them. . . .

When prayer is the daily life of the Christian, that life is successful, beautiful, glorious! When it is not, the life is crippled, confined, oftentimes a life of shame and terror. Therefore, brethren, let us pray, and pray *always*, and about *all things*, and prove God if He is not still, as of old, the One who hears and answers prayer.

—CHARLES A. BLANCHARD, in
Getting Things from God.

XVII

PLENTY THROUGH PRAYER

"Now unto him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us. Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."—EPHESIANS 3: 20, 21.

Who shall tell our untold need,
Deeply felt, though scarcely known?
Who the hungering soul can feed,
Guard and guide, but God alone?
Blessed promise! While we see
Earthly friends must powerless be,
Earthly fountains quickly dry;
"GOD shall all your need supply!"

Through the whole of life's long way,
Outward, inward, need we trace;
Need arising day by day,
Patience, wisdom, strength and grace.
Needing Jesus most of all,
Full of need, on Him we call;
Then, how gracious His reply,
"GOD shall all your need supply!"
—FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL.

"GIVE and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over" are the words of Christ in Luke 6: 38. Here is one of God's rules, not understood by many of His own children. God gave His best—*His only*

Son—for us, and the returns from that investment have and will enrich Heaven with millions of souls.

One of the saddest sights imaginable is that of a blood-bought child of God selfishly storing away goods and gold for self, and withholding them from Heaven's storehouse. No one ever lost anything by giving to God,—no matter whether the thing given be time, talents, treasures or life itself; and many of the "millionaires" in Heaven will be those who were counted as among the poorest of the poor on earth.

God has very definite laws in connection with the lives of His children. "Having given us his Son, will he not with him, also, freely give us all things?" Listen to Paul's testimony: "But my God shall supply *all your need* according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4: 19).

Man is a needy creature. There is not a single exception. The old have needs, and also the young. The rich have needs, the poor have needs, and there are varied needs for body, soul and spirit.

Paul had needs. He needed sympathy and support and these needs were supplied from God's hand, through the Philippian brethren. We have needs, though all our desires are not needs, and we must learn to distinguish between wishes and needs. And then, too, there are some things which God sees we need which we ourselves do not recognize.

For instance, Joseph needed a prison cell and God provided it. It proved to be a school designed to prepare him for a throne. David needed a cave, and God provided Adullam. Peter needed a great test and he had it, but he learned his lesson. Paul needed a shipwreck and it was supplied, and with it, blessings to himself and to others.

But while man is a needy creature, God is a wealthy Creator, and He is the source of supply for every need,—be that need character, wisdom, grace, love, patience, endurance, courage, faith; for the "rainy day," for sickness, for sorrow, for trials,—anything and everything that can come into the lives of God's children.

There is length and breadth and height and depth to this assertion. Look back! Is it not true? Look forward, with the eye of faith! Is He not able? Moses found it true: "For the Lord thy God blessed thee in all the works of thy hand; he knoweth thy walking through this great wilderness; these forty years the Lord thy God hath been with thee; thou hast lacked nothing" (Deuteronomy 2: 7). The Psalmist found it true and voiced his testimony in the Twenty-third Psalm. Malachi asserts it to be true and issues a challenge: "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, . . . and prove me now, herewith, saith the Lord" (Malachi 3: 10).

Our Lord set His seal to this same truth in Matthew 6: 33: "But seek ye first the kingdom of

God and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Paul accentuates it in Ephesians 3: 20: "Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly, above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us."

If the Bank of Heaven has never yet failed, and the checks which have been issued on it have always been honoured, why this woeful lack of faith in God's power and willingness to answer prayer and supply *all* our need? The fact of abundant provision is certain. The way of access is open. He has put the check book in our hands. He wants the resources used. The only condition and limitation is that they shall be used for His glory.

Let us draw our checks, with childlike confidence in His promise to cash them, and every earthly need for our daily lives, and every God-given desire to obey His command to give the Gospel to the world, will be granted. As the late John H. Sammis, the beloved hymn-writer, so beautifully phrases it:

"Grace that never can be told
Flows for Jesus' sake;
No good thing does He withhold,
Have we faith to take.
Rise, my soul, begin to live
Free to ask as He to give.
A boundless store
Waits the asking—want no more!"

XVIII

PARTNERSHIP IN PRAYER

What are we going to say when we get the saints gathered together in little groups in the home, in the fields,—anywhere? In the meeting for prayer with the two, the three, in His Name,—oh, listen! listen with the subduing, over-awing sense that there is Another present that the eyes of sense cannot see, but that the Spirit-quickened can know. There must be a remittal to Him of all, as we gather, then listen for His whisper in our midst as to the thing we should pray for. Then we ask, and He says, "God will give."—SELECTED.

Perhaps God *could* bless helpless and needy people in this world without one thought of human coöperation, but He does not. Perhaps He could rule as absolute Dictator, sitting in silent and eternal isolation, but such a God is not revealed in the Bible. He is Immanuel—*God with us!* He has called for a democracy of Christianity where the people must learn to interpret the will of God both for themselves and for others, and thus lay hold of His strength.—*The Prayer Watch.*

XVIII

PARTNERSHIP IN PRAYER

"But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin."
—1 JOHN 1:7.

Blest be the tie that binds,
Our hearts in Christian love;
The fellowship of kindred minds
Is like to that above.

Before our Father's throne,
We pour united prayers;
Our fears, our hopes, our aims are one,
Our comforts and our cares.

When we at death must part,
Not like the world's, our pain;
But one in Christ, and one in heart,
We part to meet again.
—*The Hymnal.*

THE theme of "Partnership in Prayer" is one of the most intense interest and demands—especially in these days—very definite consideration, for there is evident now a manifest lack of united prayer in the Church.

In Matthew 18: 19 we have set forth a wonderful possibility of and promise for fellowship: "Again

I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven."

This is so stupendous a promise as almost to stagger belief, yet how many times it has been put to the test and found true! Of course, there are conditions involved,—hearts right with God, perfect agreement between the petitioners, and a sincere intention to give God the glory.

Note the order in the verse quoted: "*Two of you*—AGREED—IN MY NAME—*IT SHALL BE DONE!*" Who can challenge this without putting a question mark to the statements of the Lord Himself? What a link for husband and wife in claiming the promised blessing upon home and children! What a link for the young people in the home—if faithful, loyal and believing! What a link for two friends for procuring blessings for those they love! What possibilities for the Church if, in "twos" of one mind and heart, the people could meet for prayer! We have seen this tested among young men in all night prayer-meetings with such definite results as to intensify their faith in His precious promises for prayer.

In the third chapter of Acts, verse one, we have a wonderful illustration of the results which came from the partnership of Peter and John in prayer: "Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth

hour." These two men were in fellowship. Though diverse in character and temperament—Peter, impulsive; John, contemplative—yet they were joined in the bond of united prayer. Had they lived today no doubt they would have sung:

"Blest be the tie that binds
Our hearts in loving prayer."

Peter and John did not know what God had in store for them, but, in faith, Peter responded to the appeal of the cripple for alms with these words: "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have, give I thee. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk. And he, leaping up, stood and walked,—walking and leaping and praising God."

Note the interesting fact that going to the temple at the "hour of prayer" afforded an opportunity to these two friends to exercise faith, work a miracle, arouse the people and preach a wonderful sermon (Acts 3: 1–26). This inspiring story has come down to us through the centuries as an illustration of what can be accomplished where *two* agree in prayer, and has served as an incentive to thousands of Christ's followers to believe in the power of prayer to work what men call "a miracle."

Then, again, *two souls,* united in fellowship and prayer, constitute a *church,* and His promise for

the Church never fails: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18: 20). As a matter of fact, small gatherings often accomplish more than large gatherings, because the larger the number the greater the difficulty in securing perfect unity of desire, and "of one accord" is the essential thing in united prayer. Selfish projects and purposes in prayer preclude any assurance of an answer.

There were no "politics" in the early Church, but there was fasting and prayer before important decisions were made. For instance, when Barnabas and Saul were selected as the first missionaries, "When they had fasted and prayed, they laid their hands on them and sent them away" (Acts 13: 3). And when Barnabas and Saul appointed elders in the churches visited by them, they "prayed with fasting" (Acts 14: 23).

In the twentieth chapter of Acts we have a wonderful picture of Paul, after pleading with the people and warning them of the "grievous wolves" that would seek to separate and spoil the body of believers, kneeling down and praying with them all: "And when he had thus spoken, he kneeled down and prayed with them all; and they all wept sore and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him" (vs. 36, 37).

Again, in Acts 21: 5 we find Paul on his knees, with the flock: "And they all brought us on our

way, with wives and children, till we were out of the city, and we kneeled down on the shore and prayed."

There is still another phase of this theme of "Partnership in Prayer" which is brought out by the promise in John 14: 17: "He dwelleth with you and shall be in you." *Christ* dwells in us (John 14: 18); the *Father* dwells in us (John 14: 23); the *Holy Spirit* dwells in us, and makes intercession for us (Romans 8: 26). So that the believer is in partnership with Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and every *real* prayer, every *true* prayer, that ascends to the Father from the soul of any saint must be in unison with Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Without the indwelling Holy Spirit we could have no access to the Father, no assurance that our prayers were heard, or of an answer to them.

What a privilege of partnership this is for us! What a call to united prayer! What possibilities are presented! *Let us pray!*

XIX

THE PHARISEE'S PRAYER

Every word in the Pharisee's prayer is reeking with self-complacency. Even the expression "prayed with himself" is significant, for it suggests that the prayer was less addressed to God than to himself. . . . It was not really prayer to God at all, but simply a soliloquy in his own praise, and was—in equal parts—adulation of himself and a slander of other men. So it never went higher than the inner roof of the temple court.

God is complimented with being named formally at first; "God I thank Thee," but that is only a formal introduction, and in all the rest there is not a trace of praying. Such a self-satisfied gentleman had no need to ask for anything, so he brought no petitions! He uses the conventional language of thanksgiving, but his real meaning is to praise himself to God, not to thank God for Himself!

God is thanked *once!* All the rest is "I! I! I!" The Pharisee had no longing for communion, no aspiration, no emotion. . . . To fast twice a week and give tithes of all he possessed were acts of supererogation, and are proudly recounted as if God should feel much indebted to the doer. . . . He simply states his claims, and tacitly expects that God will meet them.

—Alexander Maclaren.

XIX

THE PHARISEE'S PRAYER

"And he spake this parable unto certain who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others;

Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican.

The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican.

I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all I possess."—LUKE 18:9–12.

Behold, two men go forth to-day
Up to the temple shrine to pray.
Is it to pray, or say their prayer,
These twain are found resorting there?

One, robed in broad phylactery,
Nor bends the heart, or yet the knee;
No sense of sin, no weary load.
Boasting, he saith, "I thank Thee, God!
I am no wretched slave of lust,
Nor yet extortionate, unjust;
I fast, and earn a talked-of fame;
I tithe, and gain a good man's name."
Thus, robed in broad phylactery,
Spake the proud, boastful Pharisee.

—ROBERT MAGUIRE.

HERE Jesus uses a parable to picture to us the danger of Pharisaism in public prayer. The scene is laid in the temple where the people gathered for

prayer, and where they made, many times, prayers for the ears of the people rather than for the ear of God.

We must visualize this scene in order to get the full meaning intended by our Lord: "And he spake a parable unto them." Look into the faces of the listeners as He speaks, and then look—if you can—into their *hearts* as the words fall upon their ears!

See the self-complacent face of the Pharisee as he lifts it up and says to God: "Look on me! How sorry I feel for these poor people who are not in my class. I thank Thee I am not as they are," and then names over their supposed failings as he afterwards does his own virtues. As he elevates himself (in his own estimation), he lowers the others, especially the "poor publican." "S-E-L-F" is seen here in capitals,—self-conceited, self-centered, self-controlled!

The Pharisee needed a mirror in which to see himself as God saw him, and as others could see him. But this spirit of Pharisaism is rampant in human nature and it is a healthy and a helpful thing to recognize it. We may avoid the use of Pharisaical words in our prayers, but the spirit is manifest in our souls. Why should we not look deep into our own hearts and see if there is any of this unlovely trait there? "Oh, wad some power the giftie gie us; to see ourselves as ithers see us," and as *God* sees us!

Don't be too hard on the Pharisee. His complacency is startling, but perfectly human. It is the very spirit of the "old nature," and nothing but the power of the "new nature" can curb it and control it.

Contrast the attitude of the Pharisee with that of Paul: "For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God" (1 Corinthians 15: 9). Hear the words of John the Baptist: "But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come!" (Matthew 3: 3).

Do not let us boast and brag to ourselves about ourselves, measuring ourselves with the faults and failings of others: "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves; but they, measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise" (2 Corinthians 10: 12).

Conceit and deceit are twins. They dwell together in our inmost being and they hinder the work of the Lord through us. Our Lord needs us. He wants to use us. He longs to answer our prayers. But whenever we assume that *we* are all right, and that the Lord should feel greatly honoured by our coming to Him in prayer, and then point out the sins and failures of other people,

while we avoid confessing our own unworthiness to touch even the hem of His garment, we close the door of access to God and open the door to Satan, who sits upon the throne of our hearts and rejoices in our fall from the fellowship which God longs for and which is our rightful heritage.

Nothing is so well calculated to take away any self-satisfaction which may possess us as the searching Word of God. Read Romans 3: 27; 10: 1–3; 1 Corinthians 1: 29; Galatians 3: 10; Ephesians 2: 9; 1 Timothy 4: 8; Matthew 23: 24. May the Lord help us all to see ourselves as He sees us, and thus understand how insignificant we really are; and how our blatant boasting is distasteful to Him and destructive to ourselves.

We need the broken heart and the bended will, the confession of our own unworthiness, the acknowledgment of our own sinfulness, as manifested in " The Publican's Prayer."

XX

THE PUBLICAN'S PRAYER

Few words are needed to paint the publican, for his estimate of himself is simple. What he wants from God is one thing and one thing only—forgiveness. His attitude expresses his emotions, for he does not venture to go near the shining example of all respectability and righteousness—the Pharisee, nor even to lift his eyes to Heaven. Like the penitent Psalmist, his "iniquities have taken hold on him" so that he is not able to look up. Keen consciousness of sin, true sorrow for sin, earnest desire to shake off the burden of sin, lowly trust in God's pardoning mercy,—are all crowded into his brief petition. The arrow, thus feathered, goes straight to the Throne, though the Pharisee's prayer cannot rise above his own lips.

Jesus does not leave His hearers to apply the parable themselves, but drives its application home to them, since He knew how keen a thrust was needed to pierce the triple breastplate of their self-righteousness. The publican was "justified," that is, accounted as righteous.

The Pharisee condensed his contempt into "*this* publican!" Jesus takes up the "this" and turns it into a distinction, for He says "*this* man went down to his house justified."—ALEXANDER MACLAREN.

XX

THE PUBLICAN'S PRAYER

"And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me, a sinner.

I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other; for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."—LUKE 18: 13, 14.

Give me the lowest place;
Not that I dare
Ask for that lowest place;
But Thou hast died
That I might live and share
Thy glory by Thy side.

Give me the lowest place;
Or, if for me,
That lowest place too high,
Make one more low
Where I may sit and see
My God, and love Thee so!

—CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

HERE we have the striking contrast set forth by our Lord between the Pharisee's Prayer and the Publican's Prayer. It must be remembered, of course, that the publican was a *Jew*, as truly as was the Pharisee, from whom he stands afar off lest he pollute so holy a man (!) with his presence.

Smiting his breast, "again and again" (as is implied in the Greek text), he says: "God be merciful (or "mercy-seated") to me, the sinner."

His eye is on the Temple and his thought is on the Mercy Seat in the Holy of holies, with its blood offering, knowing full well—as did every Jew—that "Without shedding of blood there is no remission" of sin. He does not compare himself with the Pharisee; does not seek to remind God of some good thing he has done; does not contrast himself with some vile person of whom he may know. He knows that he is a sinner, and he knows that he is in the presence of God, the holy God, the God who knows his heart and life, and a deep longing possesses him to be like God.

Self-abasement always leads to holy desires and longing to be like God Himself, and the spirit which actuated the publican is the spirit which is much needed in our own hearts and lives to-day. The publican had no such privileges as we have, for we have the knowledge of God's sacrifice in our behalf. We can come bowing to that Cross and see ourselves as poor, undone sinners, worthy of nothing but death and eternal separation from God, but still come in full assurance of faith that all our sins were borne by Jesus Christ who died for the ungodly.

Let us never forget that the blood shed by the Son of God on Calvary's Cross is the evidence of our sinful nature and of our deep need, for

nothing less than the blood atonement for sin would or could satisfy the justice of God the Father.

The *instrument* of justification is *faith*, which is the link which binds us to Christ. There is no merit in ourselves which could produce justification, but Christ's own sacrifice in our behalf, and our acceptance of that sacrifice, satisfies all of the demands of God's justice, and of this we have ample proof in the Word of God: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God" (Romans 5: 1, 2). "And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Philippians 3: 9).

Christ has met all the demands of the Law, and on this fact as the ground of our justification, we are declared "just" when we accept Him as Saviour and Lord. By faith in Him, through the indwelling Holy Spirit, we are regenerated and have the proof of our justification: "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits, that we are the children of God" (Romans 8: 16). Faith is a belief founded on evidence. The mind gives assent and the will gives consent: "Faith in Jesus Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest

upon Him alone for salvation, as He is offered to us in the Gospel" (The Catechism).

We can understand now, can we not, how and why our Lord could give the decision in favour of the prayer of the publican and against the prayer of the Pharisee. One justified himself by his works, and the other was justified by his faith in the blood offering which had been provided by God.

There are many Pharisees yet in the world, and many in the Church, and when you hear words of self-justification from the lips of either church members or non-church members, remember that the books are kept in Heaven and that those who are hoping for justification through any works of their own will be sorely disappointed.

Right here let us all take to heart this searching lesson: Nothing we have ever done or can do since we have accepted Christ as the sacrifice for our sins, can add to our assurance of salvation. Any such thoughts only rob our Lord Jesus Christ of the glory of His saving grace. But everything we *can* do we *should* do, *for His glory,* and we will find it all to our credit in that day (1 Corinthians 3: 13). But back of it all will always be the fact "Saved by grace and kept by His power."

XXI

THE PRODIGAL'S PRAYER

This young man had to thank his swine-feeding, his experience of famine, his homelessness, as the beginning of his new life. Many of us, probably, have had to do precisely the same thing. . . . Not until we were breadless, homeless,—until we came under influences that were keenly bitter and tormenting in their effects, did we begin to know that we had done wrong. . . . It was then we called for God, and it was then that the Father met us!

What did the young man say? Did he say, "Now I have taken this step I cannot retrace it. I have said farewell to my father, and I am not the man to go back to him and say, 'Please be kind enough to open the door to me again.' No, no! I will yet make a man of myself. I will get back my fortune. I will renew my companions and my latter time shall be better than my first"?

No—he took the right course. He humbled himself. He got a right view of his way. He felt it to have been bad,—bad in its conception, bad in its purpose, bad in its whole course. . . . So it is with us. So long as we stand, God will not have anything to do with us, because He cannot. But when we fall down at His feet, when we feel our nothingness and own it—it is then that He would put all Heaven into our hearts.—SELECTED.

XXI

THE PRODIGAL'S PRAYER

"And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son."—LUKE 15:21.

Once afar from home I wandered,
For my heart was hard and cold;
And my Father's gifts I squandered,
And myself to Satan sold.
But at last my eyes were opened,
All my misery to see;
And there came to me the message
"There's a welcome still for thee."

Daily at my Father's table,
Grace prepares a joyous feast;
Spreads before me all His mercies,
Though unworthy of the least.
Now I walk in light before Him,
Nevermore afar to roam,
Rest is sweet and peace is perfect
In my Father's house at home.

—JOHN H. SAMMIS.

IN the Parable of the Prodigal Son, as told by our Lord in Luke 15: 11–24, we find *two persons, two scenes* and *two prayers*, in marked and marvellous contrast. Fourteen short verses tell a graphic and vivid story which reveals two hearts—divided and then united; one, a father's unchang-

ing heart of love; the other, a son's restless, rebellious heart, seeking its own interests and its own way.

But in order to obtain a real understanding of the meaning of this " Pearl of Parables " we must view it in the light of the two other parables in the same chapter, to which it is logically allied,—the Parable of the Lost Sheep and the Parable of the Lost Coin.

The *lost sheep* strayed away, not intentionally, but through ignorance and indifference, looking for food with which to satisfy its hunger. Just a careless, heedless wanderer,—representative of many backsliders—half-hearted Christians, perhaps because they have never been fed as they should have been. There are thousands of these to-day in our land, hungry of heart, lacking guidance, " sheep without a shepherd," but many of them with a real desire to know the truth.

The *lost coin* is illustrative of the ease with which one may slip away from the Lord, as a coin could drop to the ground and roll out of sight. The sheep is the *property* of the shepherd. The coin *belonged* to the woman. Love prompted the shepherd to seek " until he found " the wanderer, bearing it home on his shoulders, rejoicing. The coin had no power to rescue itself, and in that it is a picture of the wanderer from the fold. But there is a power in the Holy Spirit, working through others, to bring the backslider home.

The value of the backslider to the Lord is brought out in this third parable,—short and profoundly pathetic—of " The Patient Father and the Penitent Son."

Selfish Seeking. " And he said, A certain man had two sons; and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living." Here is pictured a beautiful home, presided over by a loving father. In the home is peace and plenty, everything that the heart could desire. But the appeal of the world is strong, and boylike, the son, according to the prevailing custom, desired to launch out for a good time himself. Human nature wants to be independent of God and all restraint. We want our own way, our own things; we want to shake off all shackles that control us and be free to do what we please to do.

This is the open door for every backslider. God is not in all their thoughts (Psalm 10: 4). Rejection of their lawful Master (Matthew 23: 10) is soon followed by neglect of prayer, the Word of God and the fellowship of believers. But the father does not force the son to stay home. If he will go, go he may, but " woe unto him " when he takes the first step. " There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the ends thereof are the ways of death " (Proverbs 11: 12).

Sowing Wild Oats. " Not many days after,"—a short, shining road from thought to deed. When

men turn their backs upon the restraints of God's love, it is only a few steps into the far country. The selfishness and sinfulness inherent in the old nature combine to hasten his steps on the downward way, and man has no power to stay his rapid descent.

The father gave the son that for which he asked, and the son planned a good time in riotous living. The goods cost the son nothing, though he was responsible for the way in which he used them. But they cost the father something! Oh, the sinful waste of substance, of faculties, of powers given by God! Oh, the sorrow of it all, manifest everywhere in this wrecked and wretched world!

The gifts ordained of God to be a blessing to the world, easily revert and become a curse: "Good understanding giveth favour; but the way of transgressors is hard" (Proverbs 13: 15); "For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die; but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans 8: 13). We hear much of "sowing wild oats" but when sown by the backslider they produce the most wretched harvest of all.

Serving Swine. "He sent him into the fields to feed swine." The "joys" of the far country are very far from being what they seem. The devil paints in brilliant colours, but when the mask is removed, nothing but misery is seen. It was a barren land. No home there, no loving family, no

loyal hearts; just a desolate desert, full of deep distress. He " joined himself to a citizen " but not to citizenship. He began by having his own way, but ended by being a slave, so hungry that he envied the swine their food. But he was *still a son,* with a nature which could never be satisfied with husks.

Sorrow for Sin. " He came to himself." He awakened as from an awful nightmare. *He* was the shepherdless sheep, hungry and forlorn. *He* was the " lost coin " in the filth of the road. Memory reaches back to " home, sweet home " where a loving father and happy fellowship had been his.

Settled Conviction. " I will arise and go to my father." His own sin rebukes him, convicts him and brings him back to the old fireside. His father is looking for him and sees him " while yet a great way off," runs to him, falls on his neck and kisses him. So God the Father looks and waits for His erring children to return. Let every backslider know it, believe it and be moved by it.

Now we come to the " Prodigal's Prayer " which we could not appreciate without an understanding of the conditions which produced it: " Father, I have sinned against heaven and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." This is a most remarkable prayer—twenty words in the English language. Short! searching! satisfying! He had planned to add, " Make me as one of thy

hired servants," but the father got ahead of him with " Bring the best robe, the ring, the shoes, the fatted calf! My son is alive! " Hallelujah! There is joy in Heaven over one sinner, and over one backslider.

Fix your thoughts upon these two outstanding pictures—a loving, Heavenly Father, waiting for the backslider; and the heart-sick, home-sick wanderer from the Father's fellowship. Then remember that there is but one way home. Reverse your attitude, face right about, and from your home-sick heart pour out the prayer of confession of your sin, and you will find the open arms of the unchanging, loving, waiting Father ready to enfold you.

XXII

THE PAULINE PRAYER

The first glimpse we get of the redeemed Paul we find him on his knees. When the risen Lord told Ananias about the newly saved Saul He said, "Behold, he prayeth!" But not only did Paul's Christian life begin with prayer, his entire life was filled and hallowed with prayer, even until he was "Paul, the Aged."

When he was in the temple, he prayed. When he was on the seashore, he prayed. When he was shipwrecked, he prayed. In prison, "he prayed and sang praises to God." He prayed at midnight. He prayed "night and day." He prayed "exceedingly." He prayed "with thanksgiving." He prayed "with the Spirit and with the understanding."

He prayed for salvation. He prayed that love might abound. He prayed that faith might be perfected. He prayed for power. He prayed for enlightenment. He prayed for wisdom. He prayed that believers might "walk worthy of their calling." He prayed that they might be fruitful. He prayed that they should please God, and that they might be "filled with all the fulness of God."

His prayers were for the glory of God and for self. Oh, may the Spirit of God open our eyes that we may see how little, how carnal and how selfish much of our praying is.—*Watch and Pray.*

XXII

THE PAULINE PRAYER

"*Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.*"—EPHESIANS 6: 18.

Give me a voice, a cry and a complaining,—
Oh, let my prayer be stormy in their ears!
Throat that would shout, but cannot stay for straining,
Eyes that would weep, but cannot wait for tears!

Whoso hast felt the Spirit of the Highest
Cannot confound nor doubt Him nor deny;
Yea, with one voice, O world, though thou deniest,
Stand thou on that side, for on this am I!
—F. W. H. MYERS, in *Saint Paul.*

IN Ephesians 1: 15–23 and 3: 14–19 we have two prayers of Paul for the saints in Ephesus which are illustrative of the text: "The fervent, effectual prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James 5: 16). "Faith and love for all saints" is the basis for Paul's thanksgiving, and these two graces include the essentials (1 Timothy 1: 4). Faith is the foundation principle and it operates through love. The Ephesian saints had been sealed by the Holy Spirit and now Paul prays for the power of that Spirit in the enlargement of their spiritual knowledge of Jesus Christ,—opening their eyes to the full sense of their calling and thus growing in grace and in the "knowledge of their purchased possession" (v. 18).

Who purchased this possession? Christ. What was the price He paid? His own blood. What are the riches which He purchased for us? The riches of His grace and glory. The flower bursts into fulness of beauty,—" the *exceeding greatness* of his power " ! It is a mighty power. We may know little about it, because we have not yielded to it, but its possibilities possess us when we surrender to Himself. It was this power which raised Christ from the dead to the right hand of the Father in glory.

The gift of God to the Church was His own Son. Measure this gift by the gifts of the Church to God! Contrast the nickels which are sometimes so grudgingly given with the precious blood of Christ! Contrast the " glory of our inheritance " with the meager gifts which we make to Him! His gift to us a broken heart, a broken body, a life poured out! Our gifts to Him so small, so selfish, we are ashamed to contemplate them.

Paul's prayer in the third chapter is a " family prayer." He bows his knees and he bows his heart unto the Father. How familiar it is! Our Lord gave us the phrase, " Our Father which art in heaven," but here it is a far more significant form, " The Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," the Head of the " whole family in heaven and earth " —saints in Heaven and saints on earth, including, perhaps, even the angels! A family founded by God Himself!

Looking backward and forward, Paul includes all who have been "bought and paid for." One God and Father! One Son! One Holy Spirit! United in one Person—the Triune God! One home—the "many mansions" made without hands! One family—rooted and grounded in love by a common faith and with the possibility of comprehending, in some degree, the love of Christ!

Who can measure it? Its length, its breadth, its height, its depth? We cannot, of course; yet Paul prays that we *may* "know the unknowable love of Christ" and be filled with all the fulness of God! Is Paul thinking, while he prays, of the Heavenly temple, measuring its unmeasurable dimensions, and then contrasting it with the love of Christ which passeth knowledge?

Paul has exhausted all his pleas for the Church and then lifts his heart in praise in a doxology in which he seeks to glorify God and encourage us who are of the household of faith (vs. 20, 21). In these few words Paul piles up as in a pyramid the mighty fulness of the power of God, thus:

The Lord is *able!*
The Lord is *able to do!*
The Lord is *able to do all!*
The Lord is *able to do all we ask!*
The Lord is *able to do all we can ask!*
The Lord is *able to do all we can ask or think!*
The Lord is *able to do above all we can ask or think!*
The Lord is *able to do abundantly above all we can ask or think!*
The Lord is *able to do exceeding abundantly above all we can ask or think!*

and then gives to Him all the " glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen! "

This is an explanation of the poverty of prayer. Why are we so limited in our prayer desires, in our intercession and supplication? Does not God desire to be honoured? Are we not demeaning Him by paltry praying? Are we not faithless to our faith when we know what God has wrought in the past history of the Church, and what He is doing to-day through loyal, loving intercessors?

The greatest need of the Church to-day is for " pray-ers " who are " strengthened with might in the inner man." This supernaturally imparted strength is our very life. We live, yet not we, but Christ liveth in us. Moral and spiritual strength must come from God who quickens all things. This is the " hidden man " (1 Peter 3: 4).

Love for our Lord Jesus Christ should be so deeply engrafted into our souls that our hearts would pulse with adoration and our whole being throb with intense devotion to Him. The " love of Christ " is indescribable. No words can express it. Only the echo of the blood drops from His wounded hands and feet and side can voice the length and breadth and height and depth of His love, which, while it is beyond our comprehension, is for us—if we will have it!

XXIII

THE PERFECT PRAYER

This prayer as given by our Lord is for us as well as for those to whom it was first given. It is for the child in the "A B C" of prayer; it is for the graduate of the highest school of prayer. It is a *personal* prayer, reaching to all our needs and covering all our sins.

As the scholar can never in all his after studies or learning dispense with the alphabet, which gives form, colour and expression to all after-learning, impregnating all and grounding all, so the learner in Christ can never dispense with this prayer. It is ours by our mother's knee and fits us for all the stages of a joyous Christian life, as our Lord's High-priestly Prayer, in the seventeenth of John, is ours also in the stages and office of our royal priesthood as intercessors before God. The most glowing mystic and the most careful thinker finds each his own language in these simple words of prayer.

In this Perfect Prayer our Lord gives us a form to be followed, and yet a form to be filled in and enlarged as we may decide when we pray. The outlines and form are complete, yet it is *but an outline,* with many a blank, which our needs and convictions are to fill in.

—E. M. Bounds, in *The Reality of Prayer.*

XXIII

THE PERFECT PRAYER

"Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen."—MATTHEW 6: 9-13.

Our Father, which in Heaven art,
We sanctify Thy name;
Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done,
In Heaven and earth the same.

Give us this day our daily bread,
And us forgive Thou so,
As we on them that us offend,
Forgiveness doth bestow.

Into temptation lead us not,
But us from evil free;
For Thine the kingdom, power and praise
Is, and shall ever be.

—GEORGE WITHER.

COUNT the words of this prayer as given in Matthew's Gospel, and notice how brief, yet how comprehensive, it is. It is very precious, as is all else that fell from the lips of our blessed Lord. He gave it to His disciples in connection with the

"Sermon on the Mount" after He had warned them against praying "to be seen of men" admonishing them, rather, when they prayed "to enter into their closet and pray to the Father in secret."

It cannot be denied that there has been much "vain repetition" of this "Pattern Prayer" which was given by our Lord for the very purpose of avoiding it, as will be noted from the verses immediately preceding: "But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do; for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking. Be not ye therefore like unto them."

Nothing is more meaningless than this prayer as it is commonly used in public worship, for no one has a right to say "Our Father" who has not been born into the family of God (John 1: 12, 13; Galatians 3: 26). The popular phrase "The Fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man" is misleading, for God can never acknowledge the name of "Father" from any one who fails to acknowledge His beloved Son as Saviour, Sin-bearer and Sin-purger.

So, when we say "Our Father, which art in Heaven" we are thereby confessing Christ as Saviour and Lord and thus "hallowing" His name: "Neither shall ye profane my holy name; but I will be hallowed among the children of Israel. I am the Lord which hallow you" (Leviticus 22: 32).

Therefore, for any unsaved person to use this phrase at all, or for a saved person to use it in an indifferent or careless way, is sacrilege; and to promote this habit by a public program is still more to be deplored. Do not we ourselves despise the formal and meaningless speech of people? Hear what Jesus says in the fifth verse: "And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men."

Perhaps this "Lord's Prayer," as it is usually called, was never intended to be used as a mere model for the children of God to follow, but to lay the foundation for all prayer. In its sincerity, simplicity and fulness it is incomparable. The order of development and the proportions are all perfect and should be carefully studied.

This "Perfect Prayer" has a sevenfold significance, and divides naturally into two parts—as do the Ten Commandments—the *first* part relating to God and the attitude of the believer toward Him as Father, Son and Holy Spirit; the Heavenly Father; the "Hallowed Name" and the coming kingdom.

The *second* part has to do with the needs of the believer, recognizing our dependence upon God as our Father and our faith in Him as a *loving* Father who is able to do all things and to supply all our needs. This order is natural and

logical, for God *is* first. He has the first place. He must be honoured and worshipped.

When we pray "Thy kingdom come," we are looking forward to the time when His kingdom shall be established; but before the kingdom can come, the *King* must come; and before the King can come, we must be caught up so that we may be with Him when He comes to rule and reign, and *that* is why we pray, with John the Apostle, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

The petition "Thy will be done, in earth as it is in heaven," can never be answered until there is the "new heaven and the new earth" wherein dwelleth righteousness (1 Corinthians 15: 24, 25). When His will is fully done on earth, it will be Heaven down here. And doing His will makes Heaven in our hearts now.

Having given God the Father the honour and worship due to Him, we are privileged to come in perfect confidence for the supply of our daily needs and so we may pray "Give us this day our daily bread." Why this repetition? In order to emphasize our *daily* dependence upon our Heavenly Father for the supply of every need—food for both body and soul. "Lord, for *to-morrow* and its needs, we do not pray," for He may come to-day, and then our need will be over.

We cannot honestly pray for luxuries on the basis of this prayer, for our Lord has just said in the eighth verse: "Your Father knoweth what

things ye have *need* of" and a consciousness of this truth helps to keep us in such dependence upon Him that we will be constrained to be good children, living in close contact with a Father-God who, having given us His Son, will also with Him freely give us all things which we *need*.

And we do need daily strength, daily wisdom, daily love, daily sympathy, daily patience! Food for our bodies, yes! But also food for mind and soul are graciously given us by Him who has promised to supply *all* our need "according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Philippians 4: 19).

Is it not true that there is a voice in Nature that speaks to us through the leaves of the trees, the babbling of the brook, the fruit of the vine, the blossom of the bush, the grain of the field, the drops of dew, the fragrance of the flowers, the shining of the radiant sun, saying, "I am the God who created all these things for you?" And do they not all testify to the wisdom and love of God and to the truth of His Word? "These all wait upon thee; that thou mayest give them their meat in due season" (Psalm 104: 27).

The *second* petition in this *last half* of the "Perfect Prayer" is for "*forgiveness of sin,*" and the order is: "Forgive as we forgive." This is a difficult petition for any of us to offer to God, and it is well to offer it in *private;* for to make this *public* petition to God in an indifferent, perfunctory man-

ner would be blasphemy. God knows and we know that we need daily forgiveness, but if we hold in our hearts an unforgiving spirit for others, how can our debts toward God be dealt with by Him?

The *third* petition is "Lead us not into temptation." God is not the Author of temptation (James 1: 13), but Satan *is,* for he is the author of our evil natures, and of the inclination to do evil which is in every one of us. Testings are good for us (James 1:2) for in them God proves His power and we prove our faith in God; but we do not want God to *abandon* us to the temptations which come from our own evil natures, but to protect and guard us from the seductions of Satan lest we fail and fall.

The *fourth* and last petition is "Deliver us from evil." The Bible says that "The love of money is the root of all evil," and truly it is one of the greatest and gravest of all the temptations which assault the saints of God to-day. Satan is the great enemy of God and man, but Christ was manifested to destroy him (1 John 3: 8) and we need to cling close to the arms of our Loving Lord and pray that we may be led in "the paths of righteousness for *His Name's sake*"—remembering His promise, "If ye shall ask anything, *in My Name I WILL DO IT!*"

XXIV

PRAYER FOR THE PROMISED PEOPLE

We need to put Israel *first* in our program of prayer, and it is often said to friends who cannot give time or money to ministry to Israel: "Well, you can all pray; we ask only for your prayers."

But there are two possible dangers here: one, to think that prayer for Israel exonerates us from service or sacrifice; another, to think that prayer is a cheap and easy thing which any one may do.

Really, it is much easier to bustle about and do a great deal,—say, speak at half a dozen meetings,—than to spend half a night in prayer for some definite object. It is easier to study, to equip oneself, to prepare for active service, even to acquire diplomas and degrees, and—with the status and prestige thus acquired—wield a certain influence upon Christian and other circles, than to spend much time in prayer.

Activity can be bought. Diplomas can be purchased. Whatever of blessings that energy and bustle, that degrees and titles bring to God's work, can be commanded by the amount of salary offered. But a prayer life always springs from quite other impulses, quite apart from any question of income or the source of the income.

We are all agreed that prayer is the best work and the most needed; that it is the surest means, if not the shortest, to the desired end; that it wastes least effort and concentrates instead of dissipating energy. Yet it is a gift that can be cultivated by the most humble believer and equally well, whether they possess natural talent or academical advantages, or no.

—*Trusting and Toiling.*

XXIV

PRAYER FOR THE PROMISED PEOPLE

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem; they shall prosper that love thee."—PSALM 122:6.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile."
—ROMANS 1:16.

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved."—ROMANS 10:1.

For Israel yet shall own her King,
For her, salvation waits;
And hill and dale shall sweetly sing,
With praise in all her gates.

Oh, hasten, Lord these promised days,
When Israel shall rejoice;
And Jew and Gentile join in praise,
With one united voice.
—JAMES EDMESTON.

THE Scriptural order is "To the Jew first." Christ was a Jew. A Jewish virgin was His earthly mother. He was brought up in a Jewish family. He followed, no doubt, His reputed father's occupation of a carpenter, and was known as "the carpenter's son."

Most Gentiles are careless and indifferent with

respect to this fact, but the Bible is largely a Jewish book, and the Jews must, logically, have first place in God's plan and program for the universe.

It is sad to know that many Christian people have a spirit of antagonism toward the Jewish people. It is true that, as a people, they are under the judgment of God; yet they are *also* under His mercy. Hated, despised, mistreated, murdered, driven from their own and from other lands,—they have found in *our* land a hospitable home, and—as a consequence—we have been blessed above other nations, in fulfillment of God's promise "And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee" (Genesis 12: 3).

After centuries of suffering the Jews are now going back to their own homeland of Palestine and God's prophecies are being rapidly fulfilled. An increasingly large number of Jews are accepting Christ as their Messiah and Saviour and becoming loyal, loving servants of His, and thus are marvellous examples of the truth of God's inerrant Word.

Let us pray for Israel,—Christ's own people. Let us give them a large place in our hearts. The Prophetic Word must be fulfilled, and our hearts' desire should be that many of them may be won to Christ during the short time which remains before He shall come in the clouds and the "time of Jacob's trouble" shall begin.

XXV

THE PREMILLENNIAL PRAYER

We read in the ninth chapter of Daniel an account of how Daniel—knowing by the prophecies that the captivity of Judah in Babylon should end after seventy years, and also observing that the period had nearly expired—set himself apart to a special season of fasting and prayer, to claim from God the very thing that God had promised! . . . It was just *because* of the promise and prophecy that Daniel was encouraged—nay, constrained—to pray and thus coöperate with God in the fulfillment of His own promise. So the time to pray is just the time when God has promised and when He Himself is working to fulfill that promise. . . .

We have come, in the course of time, to just such a crisis in the end of the age. All of the prophecies of Scripture point with increasing distinctness to the days in which we live, as the time when the greatest events which prophecy has foreshadowed are to come to pass, and the world's crisis reached. . . .

This very fact should lead us to pray as we have never prayed before. It is a loud call to wait upon God and plead with faith and intense earnestness for the very things which He has Himself promised—the removing of obstacles, the preparation of the Church, the evangelization of the world, and the return of the Lord Jesus Christ.—SELECTED.

XXV

THE PREMILLENNIAL PRAYER

"Behold, I come quickly."—REVELATION 3:11.

"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be."—REVELATION 22:12.

"He which testifieth these things saith, Surely, I come quickly. Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus."
—REVELATION 22:20.

Saviour, we love Thee, long for Thy return;
The night is dark, and oh! our spirits yearn
To hear the call from out the radiant sky—
The calling Home, the resurrection cry,
Come, Lord Jesus, come!

Oh! once this world was as a psalm to Thee,
A lovely chord of Heavenly harmony;
But now, alas! Death, like an awful flood,
Has covered it with agonies and blood.
Come, Lord Jesus, come!

Lord Jesus, come! Thy Bride her Lord would see,
And know the joy of being like to Thee;
So worlds on worlds will see what grace hath done,
As long as everlasting ages run,
Come, Lord Jesus, come!
—S. TREVOR FRANCIS, in *O, the Deep, Deep Love of Jesus and Other Sacred Poems.*

THE last promise and the last prayer in the Bible are found in the verses quoted. Our Lord says He is coming and every loyal heart should echo the prayer: "Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly."

And why? Because that event means the consummation of the heart longings of every true lover of the Lord Jesus Christ. When we know Him, do we not love Him? And when we know Him and love Him, is not this new life of ours all athrill with joy over the glorious prospect of being with Him and like Him, and all that that will mean to Him, to us, to a lost world and to the future of the ages to come? Is not His coming the opening scene of the great drama of the final fulfillment of the Scripture prophecies concerning His program for the universe?

Why has He given us so many injunctions concerning this event? Is it not because it is the great incentive to the Church to *Abide in Christ:* "And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming" (1 John 2: 28); to *Communion with Christ and With the Saints:* "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death, till he come" (1 Corinthians 11: 26);

To *Mortification of the Flesh:* "If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of

God. . . . When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory" (Colossians 3: 1–4); to *Sanctification:* "Who shall also confirm you unto the end, that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 1: 8);

To *Brotherly Love:* "And the Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward another, and toward all men, even as we do toward you. To the end that he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints" (1 Thessalonians 3: 12, 13); to *Moderation:* "Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand" (Philippians 4: 5);

To *Patience:* "Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts; for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh" (James 5: 7, 8); to *Heavenly-mindedness:* "When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth" (Colossians 3: 4, 5);

To *Purity:* "Teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, righteously and godly in this present world: Looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour, Jesus Christ" (Titus 2: 12, 13); to *Faithful Service:* "For what is our hope, or joy or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord

Jesus Christ at his coming?" (1 Thessalonians 2: 19, 20);

To *Watchfulness:* "Let your loins be girded about and your lights burning; And ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately" (Luke 12: 35, 36); to *Hope:* "But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him" (1 Thessalonians 4: 13);

To *Earnest Desire:* "Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?" (2 Peter 3: 12); to a *Life of Prayer:* "Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is" (Mark 13: 33).

Will any other event mean so much to *Israel?* "He will swallow up death in victory; and the Lord God will wipe away tears from off all faces; and the rebuke of his people shall he take away from off all the earth; for the Lord hath spoken it" (Isaiah 25: 8, 9); or to the *nations?* "After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up;

that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things" (Acts 15: 16, 17); or to *individuals?* "And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels. In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 1: 7–9).

Perilous days confront the Church (2 Timothy 3: 1–4). There will be seducers in these last days (1 Timothy 4: 1–3); doubters and scoffers (2 Peter 3: 3, 4); antichrists (1 John 7: 18); mockers (Jude 18). Let no man deceive us, for "in such an hour as we think not" the midnight cry will be heard" (Matthew 25: 6). So let us be found watching (Luke 12: 37; 1 Corinthians 1: 7); looking (Philippians 3: 20; Titus 2: 13; Hebrews 9: 28); comforting one another (1 Thessalonians 4: 13–18), with the assurance that His coming draweth nigh.

God's program for the future is prophesied, outlined and emphasized in His Word, and every day adds to the possibility and probability of an early fulfillment which will be sudden and unexpected. "Times and seasons" are known only to Him, but He has given us certain signs by which we may know when His coming is *near* (Matthew 24: 33), and while the nations may be planning for uni-

versal peace, and saying "peace and safety," yet "sudden destruction" will surely come upon them (1 Thessalonians 5: 3).

In view of all these warnings and injunctions, should not every believer be ready for, eagerly awaiting and daily praying for His coming? (Luke 21: 34–36; 1 John 2: 28; Hebrews 9: 28). If this is not our attitude, then can we honestly say that we really love Him?

And if we really love Him, then will we not be doing all within our power to hasten the glad day of His coming by winning souls, for it might be that He would use us to win the last man or woman, boy or girl, necessary to complete the Body, and then, "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first; then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord" (1 Thessalonians 4: 13–18).

"O, Lord Jesus, how long? How long
Ere we shout the glad song,
'Christ returneth! Hallelujah!
Hallelujah! Amen.'"

XXVI

THE PERFUME OF PRAYER

Incense, as a symbol of prayer, is used in many places in Scripture. I need only remind you of one or two instances.

You remember how, when the father of John the Baptist went into the Holy Place, as was his priestly duty at the time of the offering of the evening oblation, the whole multitude were in the Outer Court praying; he, in the Inner Court, presenting the *symbolical* worship; while they, in the Outer Court, offered the *real*.

Then, if we turn to the grand imagery of the Book of Revelation, where we find the Heavenly Temple opened up to our reverent gaze, we read that the elders —the representatives of redeemed humanity—have "golden bowls full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints." . . .

Does not this lovely symbol suggest to us the glorious thought of the acceptableness even of our poor prayers, if they come from hearts inflamed with love because of Christ's great redeeming love? The Psalmist, thinking humbly of himself, and of the small worth of anything that he can bring, says: "Let my prayer come before thee as incense," *i. e.*, "an odour of a sweet smell, acceptable to God." Yes, thank God, our prayers will be sweet to Him if they are prayers of true aspiration and mounting faith, leaping from a heart kindled at the great flame of Christ's love.

—Alexander Maclaren.

XXVI

THE PERFUME OF PRAYER

"Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice."
—PSALM 141:2.

"And when he had taken the book, the four beasts and four and twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of the saints."
—REVELATION 5:8.

May I bring Thee true sacrifice,
A humble, broken heart;
Which shall as incense sweet arise,
If Thou the grace impart?

Thou seest not as men do see,
Who judge by outward sight;
Thine eyes behold, yea, Thine eyes see,
The spirit—wrong or right.

Then give me, Lord, a heart sincere,
A contrite heart give me;
A heart filled with Thy love and fear,
Acceptable to Thee.
—*Daily Manna.*

HERE we have one of the most remarkable suggestions concerning prayer to be found in the Word of God. May prayer become a sweet perfume to

our Lord? Were the saints now living to unite their prayers in one petition to God, would the Heavenly City be filled with the fragrance? Yes, for the prayer that has the promise of acceptance is that which is made in the Name of Jesus Christ, and that Name has a sweet perfume when breathed in the voice of praise and petition. "Thy name is as ointment (perfume) poured forth" (S. S. 1: 3).

Have you ever sung

"Jesus, Jesus, Jesus!
Sweetest Name I know;
Fills my every longing,
Keeps me singing as I go"

and had your inmost soul bathed in the fragrance of the reality of that Name which is above every name? Nothing that enters the assembly of Heaven assures acceptance as does that Name. "Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father, *in my name,* that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

The name "Jesus" means "Saviour," and "Saviour" means "sacrifice," and sacrifice always carries the message of a yielded life, and reminds us of the Cross and of the dripping blood which flowed from His wounded hands and feet and pierced side. What a price He paid in order that we might have the right to use that sacred Name! What hallowed thoughts are associated with it! When we use that Name may it never be in an

indifferent, careless manner, but always with a deep consciousness of its significance.

The Father loves to have us come to Him in that Name. He loves to hear the supplication of His dear children as they tell Him the desires of their hearts, for we are His blood-bought ones. How dear to all true parents is the name "Father," "Mother"! How precious is the pressure of the hand of a loving friend who greets us and looks into our eyes with sympathy and understanding! What a joy it is to respond to the request from such an one for a favour, if it is within our power to grant!

So it must be to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think. How pitiful to Him, then, must seem the perfunctory prayer! How meaningless! Listen to Paul's admonition to the Ephesians: "Be ye therefore followers of God as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour (perfume)" (Ephesians 5: 1, 2).

Notice how doctrine and duty are here interwoven. Christ is our Example. Love is exemplified by sacrifice and service. He loved us and He proved His love by the sacrifice of Himself for us, and this sacrifice was to God a sweet smelling savour, the fragrance of which has perfumed the courts of Heaven ever since His death on the cross.

We must walk in love with Christ, our Sin-offering, accepted in Him. We must walk in love with the saints of God,—those who are blood-washed and blood-believing and who are loyal to all the admonitions of our Lord; eyes always fixed upon Him; hearts always beating in unison with His great heart of love; conscious always that the blood alone cleanses us and unites us in a bond which can never be broken. When we do this, our souls will always be magnifying Him, and our lives will be poured out in loving service for Him, as our prayers ascend in His Name and for His glory, and fill the courts of Heaven with the perfume of His praise.

As we meditate upon this, will not the indwelling Holy Spirit inspire us to a new sense of what a life of prayer may mean to Him, to ourselves and to a lost world? And will we not surrender ourselves to such a life? Is there not an appeal from the open wounds of our beloved Lord, from the burdened hearts of God's dear children, from the hungry hearts of the sin-cursed children of men, and from our own hearts to give ourselves to a life of prayer that shall carry a precious perfume to Him who loved us and gave Himself for us?

Oh, the desperate need of it!
Oh, the unceasing joy of it!
Let us pray.

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